PUNCTUATION

P 1 APOSTROPHE *Page 789*

P 2 BRACKETS *Page 790*

P 3 COLON *Page 790*

P 4 COMMA *Page 791*

P 5 DASH *Page 793*

P 6 EXCLAMATION POINT *Page 794*

P 7 HYPHEN *Page 794*

P 8 PARENTHESIS *Page 794*

P 9 PERIOD *Page 795*

P 10 QUESTION MARK *Page 795*

P 11 QUOTATION MARKS *Page 795*

P 12 SEMICOLON *Page 797*

MISCELLANEOUS

M 1 ABBREVIATIONS *Page 798*

M 2 ALLUSION *Page 799*

M 3 BARBARISM *Page 799*

M 4 BIBLIOGRAPHY *Page 799*

M 5 CAPITAL LETTERS *Page 800*

M 6 COMPOUND WORDS *Page 801*

M 7 DATES *Page 803*

M 8 FORMAL NOTES *Page 804*

M 9 ITALICS *Page 804*

M 10 LETTERS, BUSINESS AND PERSONAL *Page 804*

M 11 NUMBERS, HOW TO WRITE *Page 806*

M 12 PARENTHESIS *Page 806*

M 13 PLURALS *Page 807*

M 14 ROMAN NUMERALS *Page 809*

M 15 SPELLING *Page 810*

M 16 SYLLABICATION *Page 816*

M 17 TITLES *Page 817*

GRAMMAR

G 1 NOUN *Page 763*

G 2 PRONOUN *Page 764*

G 3 CASE *Page 765*

G 4 "IT" AND "THERE" AS EXPLETIVES *Page 767*

G 5 VERBS: KINDS AND TENSES *Page 768*

G 6 VOICE *Page 771*

G 7 MOOD *Page 772*

G 8 INFINITIVE, INF. PHRASES & CLAUSES *Page 773*

G 9 GERUND AND GERUND PHRASES *Page 774*

G 10 PARTICIPLE AND PARTICIPIAL PHRASES *Page 775*

G 11 SHALL AND WILL *Page 775*

G 12 ADJECTIVE *Page 776*

G 13 PRONOMINAL ADJECTIVES *Page 777*

G 14 ARTICLE *Page 777*

G 15 ADVERB *Page 778*

G 16 COMPARISON *Page 780*

G 17 PREPOSITION *Page 781*

GRAMMAR

G 18 CONJUNCTIONS AND CONJUNCTIVE ADV. *Page 782*

G 19 SENTENCE *Page 783*

G 20 CLAUSES *Page 784*

G 21 COMPLEMENTS *Page 784*

G 22 AGREEMENT IN GRAMMATICAL NUMBER *Page 785*

G 23 ANTECEDENT *Page 786*

G 24 DANGLING CONSTRUCTION *Page 786*

G 25 ABSOLUTE AND OTHER IND. CONSTRUCTIONS *Page 787*

G 26 APPOSITIVE *Page 787*

G 27 IDIOM *Page 788*

Mr. Wells

Arrold

Corenna Artz
2120 W. 11th
Hays Kans.
PHONE 260.

depend terms
in separation
write powerful
terms

EA

1752

3

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/collegecompositi0000thom_v9s7

COLLEGE COMPOSITION

Major. I

Minor A

1.
2.
3.

a
b
c

(1)
(2)
(3)

(a)
(b)
(c)

College Composition

THOMAS ERNEST RANKIN
Professor of English, Carleton College

CLARENCE DEWITT THORPE
Professor of the Teaching of English, University of Michigan

MELVIN THEODOR SOLVE
Associate Professor of English, University of Arizona

HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
New York and London
MCMXXIX

COLLEGE COMPOSITION
COPYRIGHT, 1929, BY HARPER & BROTHERS
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

I-D

CONTENTS

PREFACE vii

ACKNOWLEDGMENT xi

PART ONE

I. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS 3

II. QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING 17

III. QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING (Continued) 57

IV. PREPARATION FOR WRITING 88

PART TWO

V. THE PARAGRAPH 109

VI. THE SENTENCE 149

VII. WORDS 259

VIII. THE LONGER COMPOSITION 326

IX. THE LONGER COMPOSITION (Continued) 350

X. GETTING AND USING MATERIAL 375

PART THREE

XI. EXPOSITORY WRITING 423

XII. ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING 516

XIII. DESCRIPTIVE WRITING 583

XIV. NARRATIVE WRITING 665

XV. REPORTS AND EXAMINATIONS 741

PART FOUR

HANDBOOK 763

PREFACE

A TEXTBOOK is no longer written as a body of rules to be memorized. It must indeed give information—of both an accurate and comprehensive sort—but it should do more: it should strike fire, should interest, should sink deep beneath the student's mental periphery, and make him *see* and *feel* and *desire*. Students will learn to write well only when they are keenly interested in writing well. This is a consideration of such importance that we may regard it as the first business of an instructor in composition to arouse interest, the first concern of a textbook in composition to aid the teacher in this task. But interest alone is not enough. A piece of writing accomplishes its aim, Walter Pater teaches, when it conveys a "sense of fact." A textbook, especially in rhetoric, can certainly be of little use until it, too, conveys a "sense of fact." This means realization, *understanding*. No one can really write up to his best until he begins to be intelligent about the whole matter, to see what it is all about. Interest and desire, plus understanding and insight, then, may be thought of as the keys to successful composition, and textbooks and teachers have an excuse for their existence chiefly in proportion as they are instruments in bringing about these ends.

In spite of certain evidence to the contrary, it is now generally agreed that, whatever importance may be attached to direct professional training later in the course, the first objective in a college education, especially in the freshman and sophomore years, is mental cultivation. The freshman English course should, in particular, be one of the really cultural forces in a university. Intelligent and analytic reading, training in effective search for materials, and equally effective use of them when found, habits of

organized thinking and of orderly expression of thought, are all valid and practical aims for the student in this course. The writing activity itself is an art, and, though it may be put to utilitarian uses, fundamentally it remains an art, and must be taught and learned as such. The bearing of this fact upon the general composition course appears in the remark of a noted teacher of engineering, quoted later in this book: "What our students need is training in the art of effective expression; the technical part will then take care of itself."

The point of view just stated affords justification for the selection and use of many of the more strictly "literary" models as illustrative materials in a book like this, designed though it is to serve all classes of students. Such a practice would seem to be based upon the sound working psychology of everyday life. It is true enough that few of our freshmen or sophomores are to be Thackerays, or Newmans, or Galsworthys; but to turn to the field of sports, how much chance has our back-lot batsman to be a Babe Ruth or a George Sisler? Yet who would challenge the wisdom of the youngster's choice of a model, and who would deny that he will become a better ball player and do it more quickly, too, because he has chosen the best for an ideal? So with the young writer. Let him set up a banner in literary ideals; he may know well enough that he will never write anything more "literary" than business letters or billboard advertising; but, even so, he will eventually turn out better letters or advertisements if, while he is learning the art, he keeps the practice and accomplishments of the best writers before him as a pattern for study and emulation.

The trend in education is distinctly toward attention to the individual, and a modification of instructional method to suit the varying mental types to be found in even a small class. This book recognizes that in the business of writing—a thing which is, after all, a very intimate, very per-

sonal affair—students ought to be treated as individuals; there can be no dogmatic rule applicable to all; there is no single body of literature all will find equally congenial. The illustrative material in this text is therefore designed, in its diversity and scope, to meet the needs of students of a wide range of tastes, and the accompanying exercises, rather copious and varied as they are, should be a further help in appealing to individual minds of all sorts of interests and personal aptitudes. A textbook in writing can at best be only an aid and a convenience to a good teacher. It is the sincere wish of the authors that a considerable number of good teachers everywhere may find *College Composition* such an aid and convenience, particularly in their supreme task of stimulating the individual student to fresh insight and to new efforts in improving himself in the fine art of competent expression.

February 16, 1929

T. E. R.
C. D. T.
M. T. S.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

WISHING to express their appreciation for the use of the selections in this book, the authors take this opportunity to thank the following publishers and others for their kind permission in allowing them to reprint this material:

D. Appleton & Company, for extracts from Flandrau's *Viva Mexico* and from *Disraeli* by Maurois; the Bobbs-Merrill Company, for selections from *Galahad: Enough of His Life to Explain His Reputation,* copyright 1926, used by special permission of the publishers; Albert and Charles Boni, Inc., for extracts from *Joseph Conrad,* by Ford Madox Ford; Curtis Brown, Ltd., for paragraphs from Warwick Deeping's *Doomsday;* Dodd Mead & Company, for material from *Talks to Writers* by Lafcadio Hearn.

Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., for selections from *The Romantic '90's,* by Richard Le Gallienne, copyright 1925 by Doubleday, Page and Company; from *The Cathedral,* by Hugh Walpole, copyright 1922 by George H. Doran Company; from *The Old Wives' Tale,* by Arnold Bennett, all rights reserved by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc.; and from *Rough Justice,* by C. E. Montague, copyright 1926 by C. E. Montague.

E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., for selections taken by permission from J. Middleton Murry's *Countries of the Mind,* published and copyrighted by E. P. Dutton & Company, Inc., New York.

Harper and Brothers, for selections from the following: Watson's *Ways of Behaviorism;* Hardy's *The Woodlanders, Jude the Obscure,* and *Far From the Madding Crowd; The Grandmothers* by Glenway Wescott; a selec-

tion from the writings of Mark Twain; Tomlinson's *Illusion: 1915;* and from articles appearing in *Harper's Magazine* by Silas Bent, William McFee, Vilhajalmur Stefansson, W. S. Gifford and Louis I. Dublin.

Harcourt, Brace and Company, for selections from *The Modern Novel* by Elizabeth A. Drew, and from "The Language of All the World" from *The Torch* by George Woodberry; the Harvard University Press for a selection from *How the French Boy Learns to Write,* by Rollo Walter Brown, and from Alexander Wetmore's *The Migrations of Birds;* D. C. Heath & Company, for the extract from *The Freshman and His College,* by Francis C. Lockwood; Henry Holt & Company, for selections from William Beebe's *Jungle Peace,* Sargent's *Plants and Their Uses,* and James' *Principles of Psychology.*

The Houghton Mifflin Company for selections from the following, which are used by permission of and by arrangement with them: Perry's *The Heart of Emerson's Journals; Tradition and Progress* by Gilbert Murray; *The Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page;* Bisland's *Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn;* Hawthorne's *Mosses From an Old Manse* and *The Ambitious Guest;* Thoreau's *Walden* and *Sounds;* Lowell's *Literary Essays;* Chalmers' *The Beloved Physician,* and *The Life of Dante* by C. A. Dinsmore.

Alfred A. Knopf, for selections from *A Lost Lady,* by Willa Cather, and H. L. Mencken's *Criticism of Criticism of Criticism.*

Horace Liveright, Inc., for extracts from Ludwig Lewisohn's *Upstream,* and for the material by Bertrand Russell from *Education and the Good Life,* published by Horace Liveright, Inc.

The Macmillan Company, for extracts from the following books copyright by them and reprinted with their permission: J. B. Lightfoot's *Historical Essays,* Harrison's *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill and Other Literary Estimates,*

copyright, 1900; *The Crock of Gold* by James Stephens, copyright, 1926; James Bryce's *The American Commonwealth,* copyright, 1922; and *Words and Their Ways in English Speech,* by Greenough and Kittredge, copyright, 1920.

The Modern Library, for a selection from Weinberg's *The Art of Rodin;* the Oxford University Press, for paragraphs from *Essays and Studies* by R. B. McKerrow; James B. Pinker & Sons for extracts from Conrad's *Youth, The Secret Sharer, Falk,* and *Mirror of the Sea;* G. P. Putnam's Sons for material from *Views Afoot* by Bayard Taylor, and *On the Art of Writing* by Quiller-Couch, which are used by courtesy of the publishers.

Charles Scribner's Sons, for selections from the following: Galsworthy's *To Let, Fraternity,* "A Green Hill Far Away"; *The Letters and Papers of John Addington Symonds; The Greene Murder Case* by S. S. Van Dine; Van Dyke's *The Desert,* "Travelling Intelligently in America," by H. S. Canby; *Fix Bayonets* by Thomason; *Points of View* and *Critical Woodcuts* by Stuart P. Sherman, and Lanier's *The English Novel.*

Simon and Schuster, for extracts from *Trader Horn* and Durant's *The Story of Philosophy.*

The *Atlantic Monthly* for a selection from Henry W. Kinney's "Earthquake Days"; *The Bookman,* for the story of Florence Mills' funeral; *The Forum,* for material from Carl Van Doren's "Greatness and Popularity in Literature" and "Has Man an Immortal Soul?" by Thomas Edison; the *New Republic,* for a selection from "Gigantic Dreams" by Conrad Aiken.

Mr. Raphael Demos for a quotation from his "Education and Business," reprinted from *The Yale Review,* July, 1926, used by permission of the Editors and Author.

Mr. Julian Burroughs, for his kind permission to allow the use of selections from *My Boyhood,* by John Bur-

roughs; and Mr. Ben Hecht, for his courtesy in allowing the use of extracts from *Erik Dorn.*

Mr. Frank S. Halby, the publisher of the writings of Prosper Mérimée in English, for the selection from Mérimée's *Mateo Falcone.*

Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd. and The Paget Literary Agency, Inc. for the selection from Davies' *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp.*

T. E. R.
C. D. T.
M. T. S.

The Word-World and the Object-World

"IT SEEMS unfair to the developing child not to bring his word-world up to a higher state of usefulness than is now done in schools. Every time I question young children, or even college graduates, I am struck by their dumbness—by their inability to tell how they do things and to manipulate verbally their material and social world. Why can't we teach the child from the beginning to verbalize his manual activity?. . .

"Talking without being able to translate into manual behavior, or acting manually without being able to translate into words, does not give complete integration. Here is an example. In front of me are the complete parts of a pendulum clock. One child can glibly talk at great length about this or any other clock, but at a superficial level, slipping almost immediately into the æsthetic values of the clock, history of clocks, etc. But he cannot put the parts together. He knows clocks in terms of words only. In contrast, another child of the same age, deft with his hands, can take these cogs, escapement, wheels, pendulum, and springs, and put them together. But when I cover the clock up and ask him about the inside of the clock and how the parts are put together, I get no response. He is dumb. He has no words. I have a third child in front of me, equally deft with his hands and his words. He puts the clock together. Again I cover it with the cloth. He tells me correctly about every part—how they are put together and how they function when put together. In other words he builds me a perfectly good verbal clock.

"In my opinion the third child—by nature no better fitted than the other two—has outstripped them by a dis-

tance comparable in some respect with the span that separates man from the orang. With a word-world adequately substitutable for the object-world, he is to some extent master of his own destiny, independent of the world of sights, sounds, smells, and tastes."

JOHN B. WATSON

"Hours in the air, and nothing else, make a flying man. I advise you to write, but not for writing's sake. Write what you have seen, or known, or what you want to say. Then revise it and correct it."

WALTER R. RALEIGH

PART ONE

Principles

Chapter I

ON THINGS IN GENERAL

"Your letter was too dry; you must learn to write better than that."
—Napoleon to his brother Joseph.

1

IN HIS *Gorgias,* one of the earliest treatises on rhetoric ever written, Plato makes Socrates say, "We are arguing about the way of human life." And recently a distinguished English critic said very much the same thing, when he declared that the art of writing is "a living business." The art of writing is, indeed, a living business; it is, in fact, so closely connected with every phase of life as we now live it that no person who pretends to a fully useful or pleasurable existence but has a need for it. It scarcely requires remark that the cultured gentleman uses his language well as a matter of course. It becomes with him a point of pride and personal satisfaction. But there are a host of practical and professional applications. The business man must know how to frame letters of originality and force, must know how to write winning advertisements and clear instructions. The engineer needs to organize and prepare huge reports, of perfect accuracy, often with compelling appeal for acceptance; the doctor is called upon to write speeches and articles, the lawyer his briefs and arguments, the minister his sermons, and so on through the list up to and including those whose whole existence is concerned with writing—journalists, novelists, poets.

The art of writing is in truth inextricably bound up with the art of living. Writing is undeniably an instrument of delight. Through it poets, novelists, dramatists create beauty, and beauty is in some respects the best part of life. Writing has, moreover, always been an instrument of power; but never more so than in this age of increasing reliance upon the written word. Sociologists tell us that even the ability to write a convincing billboard advertisement means the capacity to modify the social customs of our nation. The man who can write, who can speak to people in a language they understand, and who can catch their ear with a voice of authority and persuasion possesses an influence that is greater than that of emperors and armies and navies. Plato once compared the power of the evil man skilled in false rhetoric to a strong fellow with a sharp knife released in a crowd of citizens to kill any one he liked. Such is the capacity of the trained writer for either good or evil today, as we see him operating on our great daily papers and magazines, or as he is represented in the floods of advertising and selling letters that pour through our mails, the pamphlets of our Stratons and Fosdicks, the arguments of our Darrows and Reeds. And through novels and poems and other literary forms, with their added force of imaginative artistic appeal, this power becomes even greater.

II

If one is going to learn to write how shall he begin? There is just one intelligent way for a man to approach any serious undertaking, and that is to sit down and take stock, to analyze carefully the nature of the task before him, so that knowing what is to be done, and something of its difficulties and resisting powers, he may, like any good general about to launch a campaign, marshal his forces more effectively for the attack.

The problem of writing is, first of all, one of communication of facts, thoughts, emotions—of mental experiences. Now it should be recognized at the outset that this is not at all an easy task. The glory of the human animal man is his ability to communicate, and the glory of the educated man is his capacity to communicate well. College graduates do not always have this ability. In fact, in contrast with his British and French cousins, the average "educated man" in America neither writes nor speaks his language with any credit to himself or to anybody else. His woeful deficiency is of course in part due to his failure to recognize that the first duty of the university man is to become a cultured gentleman, and a consequent failure to perceive the importance of mastery in effective and beautiful, as well as correct, expression. Moreover, he is likely to understand little of the true nature of the task of learning to use a language well. Apropos of the difficulty of mastering one's own tongue, Emerson once declared:

"When I read of various extraordinary polyglots, self-made or college-made, who can understand fifty languages, I answer that I shall be glad and surprised to find that they know one. For if I were asked how many masters of English idiom I know, I shall be perplexed to count five." [1]

There is much truth in the saying that no man knows his own language until he is familiar with another, but to know one language well enough to make it adequate to the complex needs of communication is indeed an achievement. The reason for this lies in the inherent subtlety in the whole process of making our ideas intelligible to others. What a man looks like, how he smiles, how he walks, is all an open book to whoever has eyes. But what he thinks and feels, his intellectual and emotional experiences, are for the most part quite another matter. A man's inner life is a hidden mystery. No one else can ever entirely fathom it, and he is really helpless in making

[1] *Art and Criticism.*

himself understood except in so far as he possesses the skill to reveal his mind through the various avenues of expression given him. To a large extent his happiness, and, as has already been suggested, his social and his material success, must be determined by his ability to establish connections between his own somewhat intangible and elusive mental life and the equally fugitive mentalities of those about him. Only thus can he succeed in so impressing his personality upon others as to count for anything at all in this complex competitive world of ours. To this end language was created. As Dante says, writing on this subject in his essay on the vulgar tongue, "For if we clearly consider what our intention is when we speak, we shall find that it is nothing else but to unfold to others the thoughts of our own mind."

This is obviously not an easy thing to do; that is why writing, the principal avenue of communication open to us, in these modern days, should be looked upon in its proper light: as an art to be mastered, as any art is mastered, through a careful period of apprenticeship, with much painstaking practice in the application of such principles as can be derived from one's own experiments and the experience of others.

III

There is a common misconception to the effect that the *art* of writing should be reserved for those who expect to write professionally, like journalists and novelists; others need not exert themselves to learn, but can "just write naturally." This is nonsense. For the nature of writing is such, the materials used so intractable, that whoever advances beyond the stage of the merest tyro to a place where his compositions have any form and effectiveness whatever, must be to some extent an artist—just as a musician who once passes beyond the simplest scales to a

melody is something of an artist. Whatever the nature of the writing to be done—bank report, friendly letter, or novel—the problem reduces itself to the same terms.

To repeat an often quoted phrase, the student must become a "master of words." To be a master of anything requires that one be an artist. Thus, the gas fitter is, in his way, an artist just as is the sculptor. The planes of art may be different, but the expert plumber, like any Michelangelo or Canova, has learned a mastery of his materials, and like them he has arrived at this mastery through a hardworking willingness to pay attention to the little things, and so has become a man with a "genius for taking pains." An artist is one who has at his command a technique which enables him, working in his chosen field, to bring about desired results. From the technical point of view, this is a definition of art which applies quite as aptly to the business man composing a sales letter as to the novelist writing a *Forsyte Saga*. Good style, declares Jonathan Swift, consists in "proper words in the proper places." The artist in words is one who, no matter what he is writing, knows how to bring about the results he desires, and he can do this only by using the right words in the right places. He must become in the true sense a "master of words." An important thing to be borne in mind by a student who is going to take up a course in writing, then, is that he is setting out to master an art which will require of him much patient and intelligent labor.

"All inferior artists," declares Ruskin,[1] "are continually trying to escape from the necessity of sound work." The fact is that he who would escape the necessity of sound work can never become an artist in writing at all. Moreover, to a large extent this must be a consciously-directed work, an effort behind which there should be a constantly growing knowledge of the technique requisite to secure the effects desired. And one must not be deceived by the ap-

[1] *Lecture on Art.*

parent ease with which finely written things seem to have been done; for, to use the words of A. Clutton-Brock, "The greater the work of art the easier it seems to us. We feel that we could have done it ourselves if only we had the luck to hit upon that way of doing it." [1]

IV

In *The Street of Adventure,* Sir Philip Gibbs makes Bellamy say in answer to a remark in praise of a certain style: "Bright literary style! There's more damned nonsense talked about style than anything else. Say what you've got to say in the simplest possible way." That is true and not true. It is indeed a perfect axiom that what you say should appear to be said in the "simplest possible way." But the implication that there is no art in this, that it can be done best without any effort, is utterly false. The fact is, one can appear to be expressing himself in the natural way Sir Philip Gibbs demands only after he has learned so much about the art of writing that he seems to have learned nothing at all. One of the valid objects of true art is to show no trace of strain. That is what is meant by the old phrase "art conceals art." The involved circumlocutions of an uneducated man trying to express the simplest facts, contrasted with the clear precision of, say, a Philip Gibbs, proves how true this is.

It has been pointed out that successful art consists in achieving well that which the artist sets out to accomplish. Very well; the end of portrait or landscape painting, let us say, is to represent people or scenes in nature as they are, to make them look natural. But what happened when our early artists began to paint trees and buildings and Virgins? They painted them in what was to them the "simplest possible way." And they painted them *flat.* Look at some of the Italian primitives. But Virgins and

[1] *Essays on Art.*

buildings are not flat; they are round, they are oblong, they have depth. Yet it was not until some one came along with sufficient ingenuity to invent the art of perspective that painters were able to make landscapes and people look natural.

Let us repeat, there is an art of writing, just as there is an art of painting, and it will never result from the attempts of the unpracticed to write in the "simplest possible way." Writing when completed should be made to seem simple and natural, but that does not mean that the end was achieved spontaneously or without forethought and labor. The painters who learned the secret of perspective had discovered certain physical and optical laws, and they possessed enough sense and technique to apply them; the writer who learns stylistic secrets is usually uncovering for himself certain psychological principles, the principles of attention, of economy, of interest, of harmony, and is developing in himself sufficient skill in handling words to make use of these principles.

Stevenson thus sums up the matter: "That style is therefore the most perfect, not, as fools say, which is the most natural, for the most natural is the disjointed babble of the Chronicler; but which attains the highest degree of elegant and pregnant implication unobtrusively." [1]

V

Successful communication of ideas, the real end in writing, can result only when a sort of communion is established between the writer and reader. There must be set up, through the symbols used, something resembling an electric current. Now an electric current is operative only when contacts have been made—through turning on a switch, for instance. Similarly, the writer is able to make such contacts only when he can in some way bring what

[1] *On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature.*

he is saying within the experience of his readers, either to illuminate an idea or to arouse some sympathetic emotional response that might otherwise be dormant. When, for example, writers on the Einstein theory tried to make intelligible what was meant by the idea of relativity, they constantly had recourse to such analogies as might arise from reference to objects seen from a moving train, to cannon balls shot from the earth to the moon, and so forth. Likewise, poets and novelists never tire of reference to love and death, the two most universal and moving of all human experiences: some one has estimated that over ninety per cent of the world's literature is based on the themes of love and death. Through the use of such concrete examples and familiar themes the writer turns on the electric switch which completes the circuit between him and his readers.

One might with some truth compare a writer to a radio sending station, though a difference to be stressed here is that in part at least it is the business of the writer as sender to adjust his wave lengths to the capacities of the receiving stations. It follows that he cannot always use the same wave length: in proportion as he is to have influence he must search out the receptivity of the greatest number of receiving stations possible. Professor Bliss Perry has defined a great teacher as one who would be able to explain his ideas with equal success before a learned society, in the pages of a popular magazine, or on the blackboard of a country schoolhouse. Some great writers have been able to reach all classes of minds at once; Shakespeare, it would seem, was understood by the very rabble of London, and so was Dickens. But whether addressing large or small groups, the writer must know his readers, and must send out his communications in a form they are fitted to accept. This does not mean "writing down" to a lower level of intelligence; it does not mean the restriction of one's vocabulary, but often the

enlargement of it to its utmost. Tennyson's vocabulary ran to nineteen thousand words,—several thousand more than Shakespeare's—yet, unless we except Shakespeare himself, or Homer, probably no poet has been more universally understood. Although Tennyson is less popular today, during his lifetime he was read and loved by all classes. Hallam Tennyson once declared of an old sailor whom he met on a cruise that of all people he had heard discuss his father's poetry, this uneducated man of the sea showed the finest appreciation of it. We may safely assume, however, that Tennyson and Shakespeare were understood, not merely because of their large vocabularies, but because they were continually able to get the point of view of the other fellow, and were thus capable of entering into the mental experiences of a great many people. That is, they were, in the true meaning of the term, psychologists: they studied men and women and knew their thoughts and emotions; they thus came to possess the happy power of establishing mental connections with their audiences as real and dynamic as the living electric current.

VI

It should always be remembered that good writing must say something. In spite of the frequent misconception that rhetoric is, on the face of it, more occupied with the way a thing is said than with the substance of what is said, it should be, and is, wherever it is wisely taught, more concerned with content than with manner. But the practical writer well knows, and this is what the uninitiated fail to comprehend, that there really can be no clear division made between what is expressed and the way it is expressed. The two are inseparably bound up with each other. "What is good writing if not saying something well?" sagely inquires Mr. Canby, implying

an answer with which no one who has considered the matter at all seriously can disagree. "Style," says Coleridge, "is, of course, nothing else but the art of conveying the meaning appropriately and with perspicuity, whatever that meaning may be." And, out of the sure knowledge derived from a lifetime of practice, Arnold Bennett declares, "Style cannot be distinguished from matter. When a writer conceives an idea he conceives it in a form of words. That form of words constitutes his style, and it is absolutely governed by the idea. The idea can only exist in words, and it can only exist in one form of words." From the reader's standpoint there is no possible way of telling what a writer had in mind except through the relative clarity and exactitude with which he has put his meaning into words. Hence, in a treatise on composition it is eminently fitting to give much space to the more formal, technical problems of expression; but in the end our interest centers in what is said, for, no matter how superficially attractive the style, unless we find that the substance is worth our time and attention, we turn from a piece of writing with a sense of disappointment and defeat.

"It has been said in praise of some men," writes Addison facetiously in the *Spectator* (No. 247), "that they could talk whole hours together upon any one thing; but it must be owned to the honour of the other sex, that there are many among them who can talk whole hours together upon nothing." What Addison says of women here may be paraphrased to apply to certain writers, for there would seem to be many who can write whole books "together upon nothing." And young writers need to be continually on their guard against such superficial practices as will permit mere verbal facility to pass as a substitute for aptly expressed thoughts. For the facts must not be blinked. As Arthur Schopenhauer says, "The first rule, then, for a good style, is that the author should have something to

say."[1] One may add that it is the first *obligation* of a writer to have something to say. It is much like fraud to offer people a thing to read if it is empty of content. Occasionally, one finds a writer who has learned to use words glibly and seeks to impose on the public a "fine style" as a substitute for thought. Such a one may for a time deceive the unskilled, but the discriminating at once detect him for a cheat. Schopenhauer, always intellectually honest whatever his prejudices, was especially impatient with writers of this type, who would "sell words for thoughts," and he inveighs against the "trick of concealing the direct poverty of thought under a farrago of never-ending chatter, which," he declares, "clacks away like a windmill and quite stupefies one—stuff which a man may read for hours together without getting hold of a single clearly expressed and definite idea."

But the man who really has something to say, provided he has industry and the desire, will find a way to say it, and the world will come to him, and eagerly listen. And this is true whether he is telling a story, writing an essay, or criticizing a book. What the reader wants is evidence of a fresh mind at work minting good true coin from the gold of his own individual mental experiences.

VII

One thing almost above all others should be borne in mind by a student of writing. If he is to make advancement, he must always write up to his best. In the field of sports every one knows how necessary it is to be "strenuous," and how quickly an athlete loses "form" through a little dawdling. The golf champion, for example, is never careless; in his most casual practice round, he makes every stroke count for all he can. A runner who would train for a meet by "loafing" around the track

[1] *On Style.*

would never win a race. He might be potentially better than his opponents, and he might put in as much time in preparation, but because he has not been continually running against his own best self, he would remain just a dub of a track man, and his lax muscles would fail him in competition with one who had really trained. In writing it is the same: the student who dawdles will make no progress whatever; will, in fact, fall into bad habits which will seriously handicap him later should he sometime develop more fortunate ambitions.

Longinus, wisest of all ancient teachers of writing, often emphasized the necessity of being content with nothing less than the best. For him, only the highest ideals in writing will serve. "Therefore," he says, "it is good for us also, when we are laboring on some subject which demands a lofty and majestic style, to imagine to ourselves how Homer might have expressed this or that, or how Plato or Demosthenes would have clothed it with sublimity, or, in history, Thucydides. For by our fixing an eye of rivalry on these high examples they will become like beacons to guide us, and will perhaps lift up our souls to the fullness of the stature we conceive." [1]

But these masters are not to be guides and beacons only; they are to be potential readers and critics of what we write as well, and it is their high taste we are to seek to please. "How would Homer, how would Demosthenes, have been affected by what I have written?" is the question Longinus would have had the young writer of his generation put to himself. "As ever in my great taskmaster's eye," wrote Milton of his own idea of conducting his life. This spirit applied to the college composition would make it an entirely different thing from what it often is. If its writer were continually asking himself, "What would Matthew Arnold, or John Galsworthy, or J. Middleton Murry, or Hugh Walpole say of this?" there

[1] *On the Sublime,* Sec. XIV.

would be little haphazard, slipshod work, but instead such a concentration of effort, such a pouring of one's whole self into the composition as would literally result in miracles.

Moreover, through the method of constantly comparing his own work with that of the masters, trying always to find what would please their flawless taste, the student would develop in himself that essential basis of good writing—the power of self-criticism. There is, in fact, no better way to learn to appraise one's own work than through the method of comparison. And it is an axiom in composition that one can learn to write well only in proportion to his capacity to judge his own work at its true value. He must learn to see for himself wherein it is good, wherein bad, to feel continually for that fine rightness which he detects in the great models, to reject unmistakably that which his best sense tells him is wrong.

VIII

It is sometimes said that writing cannot be taught: the student must work out his own ways to success, must experiment, must fail, succeed, fail, then try again, improving always through a growing sense of what must be done, and an understanding of how to do it. To a certain extent this is absolutely true. But in the larger sense, writing can indeed be taught. The knowledge of individuals of experience can nowhere be more advantageously placed at the disposal of those of less experience than in writing; a single hint, a single wise suggestion may sometimes open a lighted door to one who has been in the dark; then, too, in honest, competent criticism, which it is the function of a teacher of writing to give, there is power not only to direct and stimulate intelligent effort and to help establish principles of good taste, but also to rescue the student from the perils of a fatal smug

self-complacency. Perhaps the first duty of a teacher is to discover and point out what is good, to be ever on the alert to detect the telltale gleam that reveals the latent strength and talent of a pupil; but his work is incomplete unless he insists, too, upon the elimination of faults. "The work of a good teacher of rhetoric," wrote a thoughtful student of composition, "is not unlike that of a good surgeon, who cuts away the bad and decayed and leaves nature to heal the wound and grow new tissue." That, indeed, is part of the process. Such an operation is usually painful, and few have the knowledge, or will, or fortitude to perform it upon themselves. In such cases the teacher must be the firm physician who courageously inflicts temporary pain for the sake of permanent health. And the pupil must, like a sensible patient, place himself under direction, and endure for a while restraint and discomfort, to the end that he may finally go on with more ease and strength.

EXERCISES

1. Do you know what you are going to do in life? Make a list of the possible uses you may have for writing when you have left school—

(a) In your profession or business—as in advertisements, business letters, reports, etc.

(b) In a personal way—as in friendly letters, notes, diaries, etc.

(c) For literary purposes—as in stories, poems, plays, etc.

2. Have you been in the habit of observing writing closely? Read an article from a magazine, or a chapter from a good book. What differences do you observe between the style of your own writing and that of the authors you have just read? Which seems the more "natural"? Which seems better fitted to do its work? Why?

3. Are you accustomed to writing up to your best? Examine something you have lately written,—a letter, a theme, an examination paper; can you work it over into a better piece of writing? Try it. Make your next theme the best you have ever written.

Chapter II

THE QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING

IT IS almost enough to say that any writing is good which accomplishes its aim. And, ordinarily, we may speak of this aim as the adequate communication of ideas. Such assertions, however, need defining and qualifying. A monthly bank statement accomplishes its purpose, and so does a syllogism in logic, and each requires a certain type of skill in the use of language—clearness, order, precision. But as we pass through the various stages from the more strictly utilitarian forms of writing to the more artistic, we demand more. "Adequate" expression now comes to include not only clearness and orderly arrangement of thought, but various qualities which make a direct or indirect appeal to the æsthetic side of our nature. We ask that writing shall be interesting and pleasing; we insist that it shall show something of the personality of the author, that it shall possess vitality, shall be original, sincere and unaffected, conceived and executed in the spirit of restraint and fine artistic control. But we are likely to have become so used to these qualities in successful writing that we take them almost for granted, and if left to ourselves think very little about them. This is, of course, an unfortunate attitude; for the best results in writing can never be achieved without thought and care. It is therefore well worth while for any student of composition, young or old, expert or inexpert, to take time occasionally to stop and analyze the qualities of good style

anew. So far as we are able, in the limited space which a book of this sort permits, let us do that now.

I

Interest

That book is good in vain which the reader throws away.—Samuel Johnson.
I fear to commit the error . . . tediousness.—John Lyly, *Euphues.*

Good writing must be interesting. Of what use to write if nobody will read what we have written? A common mistake is to think that only stories and novels and plays need be made interesting. As a matter of fact, no piece of writing should be dull, whether it be on the subject of fossils, or hydraulics, or cancer. And many finely written scientific, and philosophical, and historical, and medical books exist to demonstrate how possible it is to make any subject fascinating. How can writing be made interesting? Obviously, there are just two main sources of interest in any composition: what we say and the way we say it,—in other words, subject matter and style.

Interest in Subject Matter.—Some subjects have peculiar individual appeal because self-interest is involved. Matters that pertain to health, property, family or friends, to pleasure and comfort, or the welfare of school or country, automatically gain the attention of the person directly concerned. For example, regardless of how badly it might be written, a letter bearing the information that a check for a hundred dollars is due in the next mail would be certain to arouse interest, as would the most matter-of-fact statement from a physician to the effect that the last examination had revealed symptoms of tuberculosis. In all such cases the problem is a simple one. There is no need to arouse interest; it already exists.

Of greater concern to a writer is the wide variation in subjects capable of individual appeal. Locality and environment, personal tastes and temperament, education and occupation, are probably the chief elements responsible for these divergent interests. Such differences are perfectly natural. A dweller in New York City would be little concerned with the local happenings that engross readers of the Grand Rapids newspapers; a reader of the *London Times* might look over one copy of *The Michigan Daily* with some curiosity, merely to see what an American university publication is like, but it would be too much to expect him to follow the record of events on the Michigan campus for any length of time. He is too far away. Likewise, a person who has both a natural taste and an education in art will read books and journals on painting with an interest one lacking such a taste and education cannot understand. So to a Wall Street broker a page of stock quotations may be the most engrossing thing in the world. Some people there are, especially in smaller places, who read birth and death notices with avidity; a scholar in pursuit of information upon a special subject may tremble with eagerness as he reads substantiating facts in some dusty court record three centuries old, which no one else has cared to look at since the day it was closed; another may spend years in absorbed study of the old English grammars and rhetorics in a search for light upon the subject of certain pet theories of language. And certainly nothing shows better the diversity of interests in subject matter than the distribution of readers of magazines in a great library. A well-stocked university periodical room may contain as many as three thousand different magazines, varying in subjects emphasized from poetry to the radio, from mosses to crystallography, from mysticism to the care of babies. Yet out of these three thousand periodicals that come monthly within the reach of all, perhaps no one person follows with any regularity

over a dozen, at most a score. He reads, naturally enough, the things that are within the field of his special interests.

But admitting the full influence of such individual preferences as have just been discussed, the fact remains that there are certain general sources of interest which the skilled writer will often take advantage of, even in dealing with a very specialized subject.

We are nearly all, for instance, interested in objects of sense—those things which enter our minds through the medium of our eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and so forth. Thus, accurate and vivid descriptions of scenes in nature, of machinery, of buildings, of people, of sensations of pain and pleasure—of the concrete in general—will seldom fail to interest. George Gissing is a writer who often describes nature with great power and beauty. Here are two extracts from him which picture early summer in such a way as to arouse in all of us vivid sense experience of our own.

It is Sunday morning, and above earth's beauty shines the purest, softest sky this summer has yet gladdened us withal. My window is thrown open; I see the sunny gleam upon garden leaves and flowers; I hear the birds whose wont it is to sing to me; ever and anon the martins that have their home beneath my eaves sweep past in silence. Church bells have begun to chime; I know the music of their voices, near and far.

—*The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft.*

Walking in a favorite lane to-day, I found it covered with shed blossoms of the hawthorn. Creamy white, fragrant even in ruin, lay scattered the glory of the May. It told me that spring is over.

—*Ibid.*

In his *Journals,* Emerson describes Thomas De Quincey as he saw him in 1848 at a Mrs. Crowe's in Edinburgh. The picture of this gentle old man would be fascinating enough in itself, even though we knew nothing of him as a notable literary figure.

At Edinburgh, I dined at Mrs. Crowe's with De Quincey, David Scott, and Dr. Brown. De Quincey is a small old man of seventy years, with a very handsome face,—a face marked by great refinement,—a very gentle old man, speaking with the utmost deliberation and softness, and so refined in speech and manners as to make quite indifferent his extremely plain and poor dress. For the old man, summoned by message on Saturday by Mrs. Crowe to this dinner, had walked on this rainy, muddy Sunday ten miles from his house at Lasswade and was not yet dry, and though Mrs. Crowe's hospitality is comprehensive and minute, yet she had no pantaloons in her house. He was so simply drest, that ten miles could not spoil him. It seemed, too, that he had lately walked home, at night, in the rain, from one of Mrs. Crowe's dinners. "But why did you not ride?" said Mrs. C.; "you were in time for the coach." Because, he could not find money to ride; he had met two street girls; one of them took his eight shillings out of his waistcoat pocket, and the other his umbrella. He told this sad story with the utmost simplicity, as if he had been a child of seven, instead of seventy.

—PERRY, *The Heart of Emerson's Journals.*

This descriptive account brings us to a further source of interest universal in scope. Nothing excites interest more surely than live people, either historical or imaginary. (Or shall we say than live things in general? The popularity of the animal stories of Jack London, Seton-Thompson, and others shows how fascinating tales of the brute world may prove to be.) If these people are known to us already, so much the more interesting are they. Thus, previous knowledge of De Quincey leads us to Emerson's account with added eagerness. Cooper's resourceful hero, Leatherstocking, excited more attention and comment with each succeeding book in which he was the main character, as did the Forsytes in each new addition to John Galsworthy's great *Saga*. Similarly, few people nowadays pass by a headline containing such names as Herbert Hoover, Governor Smith, Douglas Fairbanks, Will Rogers, or Colonel Lindbergh without stopping to read what these well-

known personages have been doing or saying. That is why practically everybody who might see such a caption as "THE EDITOR TALKS WITH HARRY LAUDER" would go on to read what followed.

I went up the other day to see Harry Lauder at the hotel where he was staying. My appointment was for ten-thirty, and Harry—who works nights—had just finished shaving. He came out in a yellow bathrobe, smoking his trusty pipe.

I had seen him on the stage, of course, and regarded him just as millions of other folks do, as merely a merry fun-maker. And our whole talk was only another and a startling revelation of the truth which I have often noted—that in the breast of almost every human being are depths that the casual acquaintance never suspects.

I went to meet Harry Lauder the comedian: and had an hour's talk with Harry Lauder the evangelist.

He started right away to tell me of his work in the camps among the soldiers. I can not imitate his dialect, and shall not spoil this by attempting it.

"I never knew that you were a religious man," I said in surprise, after he had talked a while.

He looked at me amazed.

"How could I have done my work if I had not had faith in God?" he exclaimed. "How could I have stood this terrible anguish of my son's death if I had not loved God and had something in here" (pointing to his heart) "which does not belong to this world at all? My chest would have burst. My whole frame would have gone to atoms. This is the message I carried to the boys in the trenches. I told them that if I had not had this power to trust in God and know that it was for the best—that there is Something back of life—I could not have stood it at all. And when I told them that, men sat there and set their teeth and said to themselves: 'If you can stand it, so can we.'

"When Ralph Connor was over here he said that you can not find a man in the trenches who does not believe in immortality. It is true. There are no atheists over there when those big shells come over their heads. And I too believe in immortality—yes, not only believe, but *know*. I am absolutely positive that my boy has only gone before, and that when my time comes to go, then I shall see

him again. I shall go there with a smile on my face, knowing that I am going to meet him. I shall go with a feeling of sure expectation: it is a glory for me to feel and to know that."

—*The Outlook.*

A story like this has what the journalists call "human interest." Most readers are very human after all, and, apart from any vulgar curiosity, have a natural craving to know what others of their kind are like, what they do, what they think, what they feel. And writers who ignore this fact are missing unlimited possibilities for appeal.

Action is interesting—even very slight action. Who has not sat all evening watching the play of flames in a fireplace and who has not been one of the crowd to gather in front of a store window where something was going on —a demonstration of neatly tied scarves, or an electric washer in motion? When action centers about people, or about animals showing something like human intelligence, it becomes a source of the highest interest. Likewise, ideas are interesting. Thought in itself is often sufficient to command interest, and thousands of books are read every year for the ideas they contain. But the ideas of some definite person, who for some reason is of consequence to us, become doubly interesting. Thus, Harry Lauder's ideas of immortality would be read by thousands of people who would never once consider reading an essay by an ordinary writer on the same subject.

Human emotions are a perpetual source of interest, and especially so when portrayed in such a way as to arouse reciprocal emotions in the reader. Half the force of poetry and other forms of artistic literature lies in emotional content, the reaction of certain individuals or groups to experience, to beauty in life or nature, to pleasure or suffering, joy or sorrow. The feelings of people have power to touch us, often too deeply for words. They are many times not capable of complete expression in language; but when a writer does succeed in conveying them, even

imperfectly, the response of his readers is assured. Arouse a man's emotions and you have compelled his attention.

Most normal people are interested in facts. Curiosity is a natural quality of the human mind; it is possibly the very attribute possession of which started the human animal on the upward climb. However that may be, writing which contains specific information seldom fails to interest. We are glad to know that the sun is 92,894,400 miles from the earth; that according to the best computations the nearest fixed star is *a* Centauri and that it is 25,000,000,000,000 miles distant; that light, traveling 186,000 miles a second, takes nearly four years to reach us from this celestial neighbor. We are likewise interested to learn that the great New York Cathedral of St. John the Divine is French-Gothic in architecture, is the third largest cathedral in the world, and is one of the most costly and beautiful; also that there is a new national cathedral in Washington, D. C., whose undoubted magnificence is assured by the fact that it is to involve an expenditure of $30,000,000. So with a thousand bits of information, from the news of the last major baseball league sale with its probable effects upon the standing of the organizations concerned, to the discovery that baby boa constrictors need no training from other members of the species, but immediately after birth proceed to coil themselves about their prey and devour it in the way most approved by the whole race of boa constrictors.

The world of men is eagerly alert for scraps of knowledge, especially so if a sense of expectancy has been aroused. Good writers understand this well enough, and in one way or another make continual appeal by stirring and satisfying our natural curiosity. This is as true in fiction as in writing that deals with matters of fact. In the following opening to a recent murder-mystery story, note how the author proceeds to excite interest.

A DOUBLE TRAGEDY

(*Tuesday, November 9; 10 a. m.*)

It has long been a source of wonder to me why the leading criminological writers—men like Edmund Lester Pearson, H. B. Irving, Filson Young, Canon Brookes, William Bolitho, and Harold Eaton—have not devoted more space to the Greene tragedy; for here, surely, is one of the outstanding murder mysteries of modern times—a case practically unique in the annals of latter-day crime. And yet I realize, as I read over my own voluminous notes on the case, and inspect the various documents relating to it, how little of its inner history ever came to light, and how impossible it would be for even the most imaginative chronicler to fill in the hiatuses.

The world, of course, knows the external facts. For over a month the press of two continents was filled with accounts of this appalling tragedy; and even the bare outline was sufficient to gratify the public's craving for the abnormal and the spectacular. But the inside story of the catastrophe surpassed even the wildest flights of public fancy; and, as I now sit down to divulge those facts for the first time, I am oppressed with a feeling akin to unreality, although I was a witness to most of them and hold in my possession the incontestable records of their actuality.

Of the fiendish ingenuity which lay behind this terrible crime, of the warped psychological motives that inspired it, and of the strange hidden sources of its technic, the world is completely ignorant. Moreover, no explanation has ever been given of the analytic steps that led to its solution. Nor have the events attending the mechanism of that solution—events in themselves highly dramatic and unusual—ever been recounted. The public believes that the termination of the case was a result of the usual police methods of investigation; but this is because the public is unaware of many of the vital factors of the crime itself, and because both the Police Department and the District Attorney's office have, as if by tacit agreement, refused to make known the entire truth—whether for fear of being disbelieved or merely because there are certain things so terrible that no man wishes to talk of them, I do not know.

The record, therefore, which I am about to set down is the first

complete and unedited history of the Greene holocaust. I feel that now the truth should be known, for it is history, and one should not shrink from historical facts. Also, I believe that the credit for the solution of this case should go where it belongs.

—S. S. Van Dine, *The Greene Murder Case.*

Interest Through Style.—The most fascinating subject matter soon palls, however, unless it is presented in an appealing way. And, conversely, interest may be lent even otherwise dry discussions by a bright and vivid style. It would be presumptuous to attempt to enumerate all the qualities of an interesting style, and even more impracticable to try to analyze fully those one should name. But it may be useful, nevertheless, to study together, very briefly, some of the elements which undeniably contribute toward a style capable of catching and holding the attention of a reader.

Charm—Personality.—In achieving an interesting style the personality of the writer counts for everything. There are people who in conversation add a luster to everything they touch. So in writing there are those who possess the marvelous faculty of making all subjects glow with a new light. "Goldsmith," as Alexander Smith truthfully remarks, "could not be termed a thinker; but everything he touched he brightened, as after a month of dry weather, the shower brightens the dusty shrubbery of a suburban villa." [1] The secret of this power to brighten and illuminate lies in the inner sparkle, the original ways of viewing things, the variety and freshness and spontaneity that make a person charming in everyday life. It is a full and resourceful personality expressing itself in the written word. This quality of charm is as difficult to define as the personality behind it; it is what the French began in the seventeenth century to call the *je ne sais quoi*—the "I don't know what." But even though we don't know what, we do know it is there, as perhaps the

[1] *On the Writing of Essays.*

chief source of pleasure in good writing. We know when we pick up *The Inland Voyage,* or *Travels with a Donkey,* or *Virginibus et Puerisque,* that Stevenson has it; and we understand well enough when we read Malory's *Morte d'Arthur,* Congreve's *The Way of the World,* Thackeray's *Pendennis,* Dickens's *Pickwick Papers,* or Thornton Wilder's *Bridge of San Luis Rey,* that each of these writers possesses the wonderful secret of charm. It is grace, it is beauty, it is ease, vitality—life itself—miraculously expressed through the symbol of language.

See how delightfully Elizabeth Barrett Browning writes of a memorable experience with Tennyson. Here is personality, vivacity, charm, interest surely:[1]

> One of the pleasantest things which has happened to us here is the coming down on us of the Laureate, who, being in London for three or four days from the Isle of Wight, spent two of them with us, dined with us, smoked with us, opened his heart to us (and the second bottle of port), and ended by reading "Maud" through from end to end, and going away at half-past two in the morning. If I had had a heart to spare, certainly he would have won mine. He is captivating with his frankness, confidingness, and unexampled *naïveté!* Think of his stopping in "Maud" every now and then—"There's a wonderful touch! That's very tender. How beautiful that is!" Yes, and it was wonderful, tender, beautiful, and he read exquisitely in a voice like an organ, rather music than speech.

Vitality.—As opposed to a flat and lifeless style, good writing possesses the quality of vitality. *Force* the rhetorics have often called it, but this is not quite the right word. *Force* connotes too much the days when rhetoric and public speaking meant the same thing; it suggests the argumentative style and the oratorical manner. Not that it should necessarily, but it does—words acquire secondary meanings this way, and cannot easily lose them. But *vitality* in writing means just what it should mean—a live style, one that moves with a fine freedom, unclogged by

[1] Quoted by A. E. Newton in *The Amenities of Book Collecting,* p. 26.

deadening verbiage, unencumbered with the impediments of heavy, awkward constructions. A style with vitality is more easily illustrated than described. It is the style of Chaucer and Shakespeare and Milton, of Fielding, Dickens, and Hardy. Most of the extracts in this book are selected because they possess, first of all, this quality of vitality. They have about them some element of life and vigor and strength, of elasticity, joyousness, or contagious warmth, that makes something within us vibrate in sympathy and arouses us to quick and lasting interest.

Variety.—A style ceases to interest when it no longer gives pleasure. It is with style, as with people; when monotony comes in at the door pleasure flies out of the window. A good style is like Cleopatra: custom cannot stale nor age wither its infinite variety. A monotonous style, when not absolutely so distasteful as to cause one to throw down a book in anger, is likely to produce other effects quite as unfortunate. It lulls the reader to sleep; it imposes such a strain on the attention as quickly to fatigue the mind into insensitivity; it wears the nerves to exhaustion. Moreover, it soon convinces that the writer was lacking in discrimination, in originality, in power of expression, and so respect for him and pleasure in his work vanish together. The best style is never monotonous. It is attained first of all by certain refusals—by the refusal to be trite and commonplace, by the denial of temptations to repeat words and phrases unnecessarily, by the rejection of the claims of any certain mode of expression to take charge and dominate.

From the point of view of mechanics, a writer can see to it that his sentences are not all short and not all long, but that short and long shall alternate, not with regularity, but according to the varied pattern of his thought. He will take care that no one cadence shall be too long continued, no one type of structure too conspicuous. He will also avoid mannerisms and stereotyped constructions, such as

an excess of phrases or sentences in parallel construction, too much balanced or antithetical expression, too long-continued a run in *any* pronounced stylistic direction, in fact.

An extract from John Burroughs will illustrate how a discriminating writer builds a paragraph of varied, beautiful, and pleasing design. Observe how, in at least two places, the writer veers from parallel construction before the danger point of monotony is reached. In the second instance, in the series beginning with "I am social but not gregarious. I do not thrive in clubs," the shift into a varying construction comes just soon enough, perhaps, to avoid an unpleasant effect. But how skillful the merging into the new movement: "Birds of a feather do flock together, and if we do not feel at ease in our company we may be sure we are in the wrong flock. Once while crossing the continent at some station in Minnesota," and so on: the regular beat of the parallel form is caught up and absorbed in the larger, more varied cadence, and the paragraph goes on charmingly to its harmonious, definitive close. This is a bit of writing worth study.

Hiram was always a child, he never grew up, which is true of all of us, more or less, and true of Father also. I was an odd one, but I shared all the family infirmities. In fact, I have always been an odd one amid most of my human relations in life. Place me in a miscellaneous gathering of men and I separate from them, or they from me, like oil from water. I do not mix readily with my fellows. I am not conscious of drawing into my shell, as the saying is, but am conscious of a certain strain put upon me by those about me. I suppose my shell or my skin is too thin. Burbank experimented with walnuts trying to produce one with a thin shell, till he finally produced one with so thin a shell that the birds ate it up. Well, the birds eat me up for the same reason, if I don't look out. I am social but not gregarious. I do not thrive in clubs, I do not smoke, or tell stories, or drink, or dispute, or keep late hours. I am usually as solitary as a bird of prey, though I trust not for

the same reason. I love so much to float on the current of my own thoughts. I mix better with farmers, workers, and country people generally than with professional or business men. Birds of a feather do flock together, and if we do not feel at ease in our company we may be sure we are in the wrong flock. Once while crossing the continent at some station in Minnesota a gray-bearded farmer-like man got on the train and presently began to look eagerly about the train to see what kind of company he was in. After a while his eye settled on me at the other end of the car. In a few minutes he came over to me and sat down beside me and began to tell me his story. He had come from Germany as a young man and had lived fifty years on a farm in Minnesota and now he was going back to visit the country of his birth. He had prospered and had left his sons in charge of his farm. What an air he had of a boy out of school! The adventure was warming his blood; he was going home and he wanted someone to whom he could tell the good news. I was probably the only real countryman in the car and he picked me out at once, some quality of rural things hovered about us both and drew us together. I felt that he had paid me an involuntary compliment. How unsophisticated and communicative he was! So much so that I took it upon myself to caution him against the men he was liable to fall in with in New York. I should like to know if he reached the fatherland safely and returned to his Minnesota farm.

—John Burroughs, *My Boyhood.*

The Specific and Concrete.—Concrete and specific expression will go far to alleviate dull writing. Young writers should cultivate the habit of reducing their general and abstract ideas to the specific. One way to do this is to find illustrations to carry their points across to the reader, in a form that will strike straight to common experience and so arouse emotions, imagery, and definite ideas. John Burroughs does this in the paragraph quoted above. "Birds of a feather flock together," he says, and immediately proceeds to illustrate his general statement with an anecdote from life. This is excellent practice. A fine teacher of composition used to insist so frequently on

examples of this kind that her students developed the facetious saying, "When in doubt, use an illustration." But many of these students have lived to bless the day that brought them under the influence of one who taught them so much about a method that inevitably led to clearer thinking and more interesting writings. The subject of specific and concrete expression is discussed more fully in the chapter on Words, so perhaps it will be enough to leave the matter here with the final injunction: never be merely abstract and general when it is possible to clarify ideas and awaken emotion by giving particular fact and specific instance.

In his book on Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford tells of the stress he and Conrad, in their days of collaboration, placed upon interesting style. In words which remind one of Anatole France's emphasis upon lucidity as a requisite to style, Mr. Ford writes,

> We agreed on this axiom. The first business of Style is to make work interesting: the second business of Style is to make work interesting: the third business of Style is to make work interesting: the fourth business of Style . . .

and he concludes with emphasis, "Style then has no other business." Mr. Ford ventures an analysis of an interesting style:

> A style interests when it carries the reader along; it is then a good style. A style ceases to interest when by reason of disjointed sentences, over-used words, monotonous or jog-trot cadences, it fatigues the reader's mind. *Too* startling words, however, *too* just images, *too* great displays of cleverness are apt in the long run to be as fatiguing as the most over-used words or the most jog-trot cadences. That a face resembles a Dutch clock has been too often said; to say that it resembles a ham is inexact and conveys nothing; to say that it has the mournfulness of an old smashed-in meat tin, cast away on a waste building lot, would be smart—but too much of

that sort of thing would become a nuisance. To say that a face was cramoisy is undesirable; few people nowadays know what the word means. Its employment will make the reader marvel at the user's erudition; in thus marvelling he ceases to consider the story and an impression of vagueness or length is produced on his mind. A succession of impressions of vagueness and length render a book in the end unbearable.

—Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad.*

One might add much to this paragraph in a detailed enumeration of the qualities of an interesting style, but the essentials are all suggested here. The interesting style as thus defined is many-faceted in its sources of appeal: it is clear, it is rhythmical, it is exact, it possesses variety and vitality and originality; it is appropriate, it must be successful in doing what it sets out to do, it must be worthy the approval of good taste.

EXERCISES

Study the following extracts from the point of view of interest. Which ones are of particular interest to you? Why? Does the interest lie in style or subject matter, or in both? Which extracts interest you the least? Why? Is it failure in style or in subject matter? Is your lack of interest due to the fact that you have heard little of the persons mentioned? Are you too far from the scene to care? Or are the ideas such as to concern you little or not at all? If it is style that is wrong, point out wherein this particular style fails.

> Bernard Shaw, that other Irish enigma, who in many ways of thought and speech resembles Wilde, when asked what his recreations were, replied, "Anything except sport." Wilde said that he would not play cricket because of the indecent postures it demanded; fox-hunting—his phrase will be remembered—was the "unspeakable after the uneatable."
>
> —A. E. Newton, *The Amenities of Book Collecting.*

As if it had slid suddenly into a sea of tossing, choppy waves, the coach pitched up and down, lurched drunkenly from side to side. The passengers clung to the seats.

"Why the devil doesn't the fool stop the train?" growled the Englishman opposite me.

But we were already slowing down.

"Jishin!" (earthquake) yelled a Japanese, pointing out of the window.

I glanced out just as the stone face of an embankment shot down over the tracks. It did not slide or tumble down: it literally shot down, as if compelled by a sudden, gigantic pressure from the top, the stones spreading in a twinkling over the wide right-of-way. A four-story concrete building vanished, disintegrated in the flash of an eye. Tiles cascaded with precipitate speed from the roofs. The one predominating idea that struck the mind was the almost incredible rapidity of the destruction.

The conductor came to the front of the car, doffed his cap, scorning to let even an earthquake interfere with courtesy. "I'm sorry. This train will not proceed further toward Yokohama." [1]

For the professional hobo New Hampshire is a most inhospitable region. For the hiker it is a paradise. . . . People are now able to discriminate between tramps and trampers, until farmers and hotel men alike as readily open their doors to-day to the latter, as they vigourously slam them against the former.

The advent of the automobile drove the bicycle off the roads, but to the gentle art of tramping it is destined to be a stimulation. No car can ever encroach upon the mountain trails, which will always remain sacred to the hiker, while out on the open road, the auto is his friend, helping him cover monotonous stretches of hot highway, and providing, through the increasing patronage of its devotees, new moderate-priced hotels that cater to the transient.

—ALLEN CHAMBERLAIN, *Some Road Is Always Open.*

[1] HENRY W. KINNY, "Earthquake Days." The rest of this article may be found in the *Atlantic Monthly,* January, 1924.

I have felt an elevation of mind and spirit, a perfect rapture from morning till night, since we left Vienna. It is the brightest and balmiest June weather; and an ever fresh breeze sings through the trees and waves the ripening grain on the verdant meadows and hillslopes. The air is filled with bird-music. The larks sing above us out of sight, the bullfinch wakes his notes in the grove, and at even the nightingale pours forth her thrilling strain. The meadows are literally covered with flowers—beautiful purple salvias, pinks such as we have at home in our gardens, and glowing buttercups colour the banks of every stream. I never saw richer or more luxuriant foliage. Magnificent forests clothe the hills, and the villages are imbedded in fruit-trees, shrubbery, and flowers. Sometimes we go for miles through some enchanting valley, lying like a paradise between the mountains, while the distant, white Alps look on it from afar; sometimes over swelling ranges of hills, where we can see to the right the valley of the Danube, threaded by his silver current and dotted with white cottages and glittering spires, and farther beyond, the blue mountains of the Bohemian Forest. To the left the range of the Styrian Alps stretches along the sky, summit above summit, the farther ones robed in perpetual snow. I could never tire gazing on those glorious hills. They fill the soul with a conception of sublimity, such as one feels when listening to triumphant music. They seem like the marble domes of a mighty range of temples, where earth worships her Maker with an organ-anthem of storms!

There is a *luxury* in traveling here. We walk all day through such scenes, resting often in the shade of the fruit-trees which line the road, or on a mossy bank by the side of some cool forest. Sometimes for enjoyment as well as variety, we make our dining-place by a clear spring instead of within a smoky tavern; and our simple meals have a relish an epicure could never attain. Away with your railroads and steamboats and mail-coaches, or keep them for those who have no eye but for the sordid interest of life! With my knapsack and pilgrim-staff, I ask not their

aid. If a mind and soul full of rapture with beauty, a frame in glowing and vigorous health, and slumbers unbroken even by dreams, are blessings any one would attain, let him pedestrianize it through Lower Austria!

—Bayard Taylor, *Views Afoot.*

In the widest and most correct sense of the word, an activity is "useful" when it has good results.

—Bertrand Russell, *Education and the Good Life.*

Infants are far more cunning than grown-up people are apt to suppose; if they find that crying produces agreeable results, they will cry. When, in later life, a habit of complaining causes them to be disliked instead of petted, they feel surprised and resentful, and the world seems to them cold and unsympathetic. If, however, they grow up into charming women, they will still be petted when they are querulous, and the bad training begun in childhood will be intensified. The same thing is true of rich men. Unless the right methods are adopted in infancy, people in later life will be either discontented or grasping, according to the degree of their power.

—*Ibid.*

In Roxbury, in 1825, I read Cotton's translation of Montaigne. It seemed to me as if I had written the book myself in some former life, so sincerely it spoke my thought and experience. No book before or since was ever so much to me as that.

—Perry, *The Heart of Emerson's Journals.*

I avoid the Stygian anniversaries at Cambridge, those hurrahs among the ghosts, those yellow, bald, toothless meetings in memory of red cheeks, black hair, and departed health.

—*Ibid.*

"Jessie Conrad's memoir of her husband," writes a reviewer, "gives a lively picture of genius in shirtsleeves."

Within gun-reach of me trudged my little Akawai Indian hunter.

. . . . .

And for the next mile Dante vanished from my thoughts and I mused upon the sturdy little red man.

—William Beebe, *Jungle Peace.*

The notion that inspiration is something that happened thousands of years ago, and was then finished and done with, never to occur again: in other words, the theory that God retired from business at that period and has not since been heard from, is as silly as it is blasphemous. He who does not believe that revelation is continuous does not believe in revelation at all, however familiar his parrot's tongue and pewsleepy ear may be with the word.

—G. B. Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism.*

Phillipa is very well, and, alas, very old; she is nine, and terribly full of sound sense. She tells me every other day that I am silly.

—Raleigh, *Letters.*

It has become a common expression to say "dirty tramp," or, "as dirty as a tramp"; but this is not always true, except occasionally in the large cities; although such a term may be applied morally to them all. There is one species of tramp who wanders from workhouse to workhouse; and this man, having every night to conform strictly to the laws of cleanliness, is no less clean, and often cleaner, than a number of people whose houses contain bathrooms which they seldom use. Another species of tramp is proud of being a good beggar, who scorns the workhouse, but who knows well that a clean appearance is essential to his success. For this reason, any one that enters a common lodging house can at once see what efforts are being made to this end. It seems strange to say, but the dirtiest looking tramp is often the most honest and respectable, for he has not the courage to beg either food

or clothes, nor will he enter the doors of a workhouse. I have seen this so often the case that I would much prefer to believe a dirty ragged tramp who might tell me that he had a good home six months previous, than to believe his cleaner namesake, who seems so eager to impart this information unsolicited. It is certainly the man who has had a good home, who has been waited on by other hands, who soon succumbs to a filthy condition, when it becomes necessary to wait on himself by washing and patching his own clothes; and the higher his former position has been the lower he sinks in the social strata.

—W. H. Davies, *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp.*

Yesterday I passed by an avenue, leading to a beautiful old house. The road between the trees was covered in all its length and breadth with fallen leaves—a carpet of pale gold. Farther on, I came to a plantation, mostly of larches; it shone in the richest aureate hue, with here and there a splash of blood-red, which was a young beech in its moment of autumnal glory.

I looked at an alder, laden with brown catkins, its blunt foliage stained with innumerable shades of lovely colour. Near it was a horse-chestnut, with but a few leaves hanging on its branches, and those a deep orange. The lines, I see, are already bare.

Tonight the wind is loud, and rain dashes against my casement; to-morrow I shall awake to a sky of winter.

—Gissing, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft.*

There was a time when it delighted me to flash my satire on the English Sunday; I could see nothing but antiquated foolishness and modern hypocrisy in this weekly pause from labour and from bustle. Now I prize it as an inestimable boon, and dread every encroachment upon its restful stillness. Scoff as I might at "Sabbatarianism," was I not always glad when Sunday came? The bells of London churches and chapels are not soothing to the ear, but when I remember their sound—even that of the most aggressively pharisaic conventicle, with its dire clapper—I find it associated with a sense of repose, of liberty. This

day of the seven I granted to my better genius; work was put aside, and, when Heaven permitted, trouble forgotten.

—*Ibid.*

I said when I awoke, After some more sleepings and wakings I shall lie on this mattress sick; then, dead; and through my gay entry they will carry these bones. Where shall I be then? I lifted my head and beheld the spotless orange light of the morning beaming up from the dark hills into the wide Universe.

—Bliss Perry, *The Heart of Emerson's Journals.*

I have read *Oliver Twist* in obedience to the opinions of so many intelligent people as have praised it. The author has an acute eye for costume; he sees the expression of dress, of form, of gait, of personal deformities; of furniture, of the outside and inside of houses; but his eye rests always on surfaces; he has no insight into character.

—*Ibid.*

The next generation will thank Dickens for showing so many mischiefs which parliaments and Christianities had not been strong enough to remove.

—*Ibid.*

II

Clearness

I came therefore to this old man, who owed his name rather to long familiarity than to his intelligence or his memory. To whom if any came knocking upon his door in uncertainty as to some question, he departed more uncertain still. Indeed he was admirable in the eyes of his hearers, but of no account in the eyes of questioners. His fluency of words was admirable, but in sense they were contemptible and devoid of reason. When he kindled a fire he filled his house with smoke rather than lighted it with a blaze.—Abélard and Héloïse.

Write for the London cabman.—Walter Raleigh to Walter Peck.

Anatole France, notable in his lifetime for his excellent French prose, is reported to have responded to a question

as to what constitutes good style, by saying, "The first rule for a good style is *lucidity;* the second is *lucidity;* and the third is *lucidity.*" This, to be sure, is exaggeration; for while it is exactly true to say that any good style must be clear, the converse is far from the truth: many a dull style is perfectly clear. But France resorted to hyperbole to make very plain the vast importance he attached to the element of clearness. And in so doing, he was stressing a quality that has been almost an instinct with the French since the birth of their language. Acting on the belief that "what is not clear is not French," their writers have learned to achieve what Brunetière calls that "transparent and radiant clearness" which makes French prose what it is today, one of the most perfect instruments for the expression of ideas ever invented by man. English prose has always had much to learn from the French in this respect. That is what Galsworthy means when he instructs the young writer to read French authors—"Their economy of words and clearness is wonderful."

Students of composition can scarcely pay too much attention to this essential of clearness. To make ideas intelligible is, after all, the first consideration of every sincere writer. And logically so: for as the wise Pelletier well declared in condemning obscurity: "There is no difference between not speaking at all and not being understood." What the writer wants to do is to make his reader understand, to see. As Henry Seidel Canby inquires in an editorial in the *Saturday Review,* "And who ever thrilled over a line of poetry, or grew excited in a fine climactic chapter, or rose to a speech in a play, unless it opened meanings, stirred emotions, gave over ideas and feelings that plain dull writing never would yield?" Here in epitome is the substance of what constitutes good writing and what its effects should be.

"'It is above all things to make you see.'" This, says Ford, was Conrad's artistic message. "Seeing is be-

lieving for all the doubters of this planet, from Thomas to the end: if you can make humanity see the few very simple things upon which this temporal world rests you will make mankind believe such eternal truths as are universal." [1]

Conrad often tried to do that which ordinary writers will seldom or never attempt: he sought to catch and express those subtle, intangible spiritual truths that every one feels, but few can define. But his ideal is the right one for anybody who essays to put even the most commonplace ideas into words—for the engineer writing his report, the lawyer preparing his brief, the journalist his article. Lucidity—to make clear, to arouse the understanding, to make the blind to see: that is the foundation of good writing. Quintilian put the whole matter beautifully and concisely: "With me, however," he declared, "let the first virtue of composition be perspicuity; let there be proper words, and a clear order; let not the conclusion of the sense be too protracted; and let there be nothing either deficient or superfluous. Thus will our language both deserve the commendation of the learned and be intelligible to the unlearned." [2]

Clearness Is Relative.—Clearness in writing is necessarily relative. A grown person will understand easily what a child cannot. Even the dialect and slang of a given locality may be unintelligible to people of another part of the same country. A lawyer can get out of his case books meanings which the layman cannot grasp, and technical and professional men in general, educated in certain terminology and in esoteric lines of thought, can read with full comprehension what would be pure Greek to men and women without such specialized training. But with the talk of philosopher to philosopher, of engineer to engineer, of scientist to scientist, we are little concerned

[1] *Joseph Conrad,* p. 178.
[2] *Institutes of Oratory,* Book II, p. 85.

in this book. Our chief interest here must be in the talk of man to man. And there is no technical or professional man but can well profit by centering his attention upon this problem first. "What our engineering students need in the way of English," said a noted teacher of engineering to the writer recently, "is to learn to express themselves in ordinary English. The technical terms will take care of themselves."

Clearness and Thinking.—The first recipe for clearness in writing is clear thinking. To have a full understanding of what one wants to express is not, to be sure, a guarantee of good writing. A certain amount of technical skill in the use of language is necessary before even the clearest thoughts can be successfully conveyed, and to acquire such skill takes study and practice. But it is certain that there can be no clear expression, no matter what the skill in language, without clear thinking. Students of composition should be on their guard against vague, hazy ideas, should train themselves to know what they know, definitely and well. They should exercise themselves in the art of verbalizing their ideas. "Can I put this clearly into words?" the young writer should constantly ask himself. There is no better test for direct, clean-cut thinking than this. As ideas clear, then proper words fall more easily into their proper places, and the beginnings of a good, serviceable prose style appear.

Proper Words and a Clear Order.—Beyond Quintilian's injunction, "Let there be proper words and a clear order . . . let there be nothing either deficient or superfluous," there is really little to be said by way of precept about a perspicuous prose style. But this implies much in the way of judgment and training. A writer who would be clear must use words that he himself understands—many young students of composition do not observe this simple rule, and hence make amusing blunders. He will likewise avoid hard, obscure terms which he himself may

understand, but which others may not, and will instead search for simple equivalents which will often express all that the difficult words could, or more—such words can usually be found. Dean Swift relates of the scholarly Lord Falkland that it was his habit to try out all that he wrote, especially doubtful words, on his uneducated serving woman. What she understood, he let stand. Swift recommends such a practice to those who would be clear in all they say, and, in spite of its exaggeration, there is some good sense in his view. Except in speech and writing by technical and professional men for others of their kind, a composition fitted for the average man, intelligible to individuals of all classes, would seem desirable. One even suspects that writers on scientific and professional subjects would often make themselves better understood to each other by using a simpler expression. "But I know not how it comes to pass," says Swift, "that professors in most arts and sciences are generally the worst qualified to explain their meanings to those who are not of their tribe: a common farmer shall make you understand in three words that his foot is out of joint, or his collar-bone broken, wherein a surgeon, after a hundred terms of art, if you are not a scholar, shall leave you to seek." To talk of something upon which one's thoughts are clear, in the language of men, in simple uninvolved order, with neither superfluities nor omissions, is, then, the way to a clear style. "The perfection of style," says Aristotle, "is to be clear without being mean."

EXERCISES

Study some of the members of your class who talk and write obscurely and incoherently. The chances are you will find they have indolently fallen into slovenly ways of thinking, that they have not learned to stick to an idea long enough to let it form itself clearly in the mind, that when it comes to facts they are content with half-knowledge, do not insist on full and definite information.

Hence, when they come to talk, they use vague, intangible phrases, and really have nothing to say worth hearing.

Be on your guard against this fault of half-thought and inadequate expression. Learn to concentrate; cultivate the habit of meditating your way through ideas to clear conclusions; and practice putting these conclusions into clear language.

1. The next time you fail in a recitation, go back to your book or your notes and study. Think over what you have read. Then summarize it. If you don't succeed the first time, try again.

2. One of the vices of modern times is too much thoughtless skimming over of books. Lafcadio Hearn once declared rather impatiently that of all the thousands of people who are constantly reading books, it is the rarest thing in the world to find one who can express an intelligent opinion about what he has read. This, of course, should not be said of educated college folk, *must* not be said of *you,* for instance. But there is only one way you can prevent it: make a practice of reading no book without spending enough time and thought on it to make up your mind what it is about and what you think of it, so definitely that you can express your ideas clearly to others.

(a) State clearly the central idea of the latest book you have read.

(b) Write a brief, lucid summary of this same book.

(c) State clearly your opinions of the book, from the point of view

(1) Of plot—if a novel or play
(2) Of thought
(3) Of style
(4) Of characters—if a novel or play.

(d) Compare it with some other book you have read.

3. Cultivate the habit of clearly relating events you have witnessed or in which you have taken part.

(a) Relate clearly and in order the process of registering in your college.

(b) Explain clearly what happened in the most exciting accident you ever witnessed.

(c) Relate clearly what happened in your first quarrel with your best friend.

4. Tell exactly what is meant by the following words and phrases:

To mobilize an army
Ambassador plenipotentiary
A snob
Vice ring
Neap tide
Ship subsidy
Æsthetic experience

5. Do you have a clear idea of what is meant by "begging the question" in debate? By "filibustering" in Congress? By "gerrymandering" in politics? By "boycotting" an industry? By "tacking" in sailing a boat? By "lofting" in tennis? By "the bed of Procrustes"?

6. What is meant by such terms in music as *allegro, adagio, rondo, aria, theme, scherzo, andante?* Try to explain each clearly.

7. Have you ever seriously considered your own definition of the word *education?* Exactly what do you mean when you say, "I want an education"? What is it you want? What are you in college for? If you are not getting an *education* yourself, as you conceive the term, what would you have if you were really to get one? Answer one or more of these questions in a definite, clear-cut discussion not exceeding five hundred words in length.

III

Organic Unity

Every composition should group itself about one central idea.
—Barrett Wendell, *English Composition.*

We should take care that each group has, for our purpose, a unity of its own; and that the unity of each larger group is of a kind that may properly be resolved into the smaller unities of which it is composed.—Ibid.

The Principle of Organic Unity.—A clear, pleasing, and interesting style can result only when writing is *organic;* that is, when it has organization, structure, unity of form. It was first Plato and then Aristotle who likened the unity of a composition to that of a living body. "At any rate,"

declared Plato in his *Phædrus,* in one of the most striking metaphors of all time, "you will allow that every discourse ought to be a living creature, having a body of its own and a head and feet; there should be a middle, beginning, and an end, adapted to one another and the whole." And Aristotle, Plato's distinguished pupil, insisted, in words which recall those of his master, that the plot of a narrative or a drama "should have for its subject a single action, whole and complete, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. It will thus resemble a living organism in all its unity, and produce the pleasure proper to it."

Much water has passed through the mill since Plato and Aristotle, and we no longer accept without question everything they said; but what they wrote of organic unity is everlastingly sound—if interpreted in a common-sense way—and it will probably never be superseded, either in its application to literature or to art in general. What they meant, in its simplicity, is that a piece of writing to be good must hang together. Materials must not be thrown hugger-mugger into a confused mass but must be built up, according to a plan, of homogeneous elements, fitted to each other in a harmonious relationship, varied in form and in function, yet each bearing some definite part in carrying out the larger design. When any work of art has been so constructed, it cannot be added to and nothing can be taken away from it without loss. As Aristotle explained, "the structural union of the parts" should be "such that, if any of them is displaced or removed, the whole will be disjointed and disturbed."

This sort of unity is attained in writing when the details of an experience are set forth in the true order of their occurrence, when ideas are presented in effective arrangement with reference to a natural relationship of thought to thought. Lowell said of the author of the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,* Thomas Gray, that he had

one idea about writing without which "all the poetic outfit is of little avail," the idea of combination and arrangement. It was his effective combination and arrangement of the relationships of thought that made Gray the master he became. Can you put your visions, your dreams, your thoughts, your feelings, your experience of facts, into proper combination and effective arrangement? There's the rub. Can you, as it were, lick your material into shape? Virgil is responsible for that figure of speech. Accomplishing a piece of good craftsmanship, he said, is to be compared with the licking of her cub into shape by the mother bear. The cub is something of her own, crude in shape, almost formless; she licks it into beauty, which Coleridge thought of as vitality plus shapeliness. In this respect science and art are alike; each endeavors to put the raw material of experience into shapely form. It used to be said that science is knowledge classified. We now think of science as classified to an end, that end or aim being a conception of wholeness, or the related form of all thought. And this is art also, the combining of details in natural proportions so that there is no mutilation and no monstrous exaggeration giving an effect of unhealthy life, but all shaped and arranged to give the impression of wholeness and vigor.

Organic unity means just this, the licking of well-selected material into shape, according to natural laws of logic and structure. In architecture, painting, and writing it is the same. The cathedral of Notre Dame and Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind* alike owe their deathless charm to their near approach to ideal organic unity. There is in such works a harmony of parts all working toward a given end. In Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper* there are thirteen persons represented, and a table and food and dishes. But a single idea dominates the piece, and each individual unit, though complete in itself, contributes to the harmonious development of this idea. Not a part

could be removed or displaced without disturbing or disjointing the whole.

Proportion.—Organic unity requires that a given piece of writing shall not be too long nor yet too short, but shall be of proportions suitable to fulfill the specific aim of the writer. "To be beautiful," says Aristotle, "a living organism, or any other individual thing made up of parts [such as an essay, a plan or a novel, for instance], must possess not only an orderly arrangement of . . . parts, but also a proper magnitude. . . . Hence an extremely minute creature cannot be beautiful to us; for we see the whole in an almost infinitesimal moment of time, and lose the pleasure that comes from a distinct perception of order in the parts. Nor could a creature of vast dimensions be beautiful to us—a beast, say, one thousand miles in length; for in that case the eye could not take all of the object in at once—we could see the parts, but not the unity of the whole." Now even the experienced do not always realize the truth contained in these rather naïve statements of Aristotle. And young writers easily err in judgments of proportion. Thus, when Lord Macaulay as a boy of seven tried to cover all history from the beginning to the present in a short essay of twenty-four pages, he was violating the principle of proportion. It often happens so. The inexpert, sometimes even the expert, writer errs in planning a treatment all out of proportion to the scope of his subject. With very little material available he plans an extended essay, or he tries to cover the World War in a two-page theme. But the inflated skin of an elephant does not make an elephant; a mouse with head, tail, liver, and other organs, though infinitely smaller, is a much finer organism than such a travesty of an animal. It is at least complete, and alive, able to function. So Macaulay's later essay on Lord Clive, brief but whole, was a better piece of history than his infantile extravaganza. On the other hand, when G. B. Shaw put his conception

of the hypothetical progress of man from the infancy of the race to a period of perfection some thousands of years hence into a mammoth play that could not be acted in less than nine hours, he was seriously ignoring Aristotle's wise dictum as to the necessity of observing a due proportion in organically unified objects.

The significant thing for the writer is that he should so plan his work that its larger and smaller units of structure shall be adapted as perfectly as may be to his purpose. A twenty-page essay is too small a compass for a history of the world; a four-hundred-page play is too long to be acted. The whole problem is one of fitness of means to the end.

Organic Unity and Style.—The principle of organic unity is applicable not only to the units of structure in relation to each other, but to the style in which the composition is written. Unity of tone and method are as essential as unity in thought and a coherent arrangement. A writer will not change from grave to gay without good reason, nor from the argumentative and serious to the satiric and light, nor from slow to fast, nor from formal to informal; but once having set a tone and mode of treatment, he will ordinarily stick to them throughout his composition, shifting into another manner only when the nature of the subject matter or the end in view makes such a change appropriate.

The Latin poet, Horace, vividly expressed the objection to mixed styles and incoherency in general at the beginning of his famous *Art of Poetry:*

> If in a picture, Piso, you should see
> A handsome woman with a fish's tail
> Or a man's head upon a horse's neck,
> Or limbs of beasts of the most diff'rent kinds,
> Cover'd with feathers of all sorts of birds,

> Would you not laugh and think the painter mad?
> Trust me, that book is as ridiculous,
> Whose incoherent style (like sick men's dreams)
> Varies all shapes and mixes all extremes.

Yet no one style in writing will do for all subjects and all occasions, any more than the same type of architecture would do alike for kirk, shop, and cottage. The important thing is that whatever a writer sets out to perform he shall carry through to a successful end. The only real criterion by which one can judge the relative perfection of a given style is the degree to which the method suits the aim of the writer. There is as fine organic unity in the rough prose of Falstaff as in the dithyrambic flights of Hotspur, in the coarse language of Trinculo as in the delicate songs of Ariel. The question always must be, Has the writer so used his language as to express his sense in the best manner possible?

It is obvious from what has been said that a rhythm suitable for poetry will not do for prose. In fact, a certain mark of defective prose is a passage containing the regular cadenced beat of verse. As Coleridge justly remarks, "It is almost characteristic of indifferent prose writers that they should be constantly slipping into scraps of metre." Yet it is true that one sometimes finds even a good writer betrayed in a moment of enthusiasm into this fault. Such an example is the following from J. A. Symonds's *The Greek Poets*.

> Her body sways upon the hips, where rests her modelled arm; the ankle and the foot are sights to sit and gaze at through a summer's day.

One can easily mark this off into lines of unrhymed iambic verse. There is only one break in the regular meter—*to sit and gaze at*—and this is no greater an irregularity than frequently occurs in metrical poetry.

Her body sways upon the hips,
Where rests her modelled arm;
The ankle and the foot are sights
To sit and gaze at through a summer's day.

This is not, however, Mr. Symonds's best prose; and had the passage been called to his attention, he would no doubt have been much chagrined to find what he had done.

The ideal of perfectly organic writing is a high one and can be fully realized by few. But it still remains an entirely practical guide to even the humblest beginner, if he will but accept it. Indeed, the moment one begins to put words and phrases together with any regard for accurate expression, he is faced with the principle of organic unity, and, consciously or unconsciously, is seeking to make application of it. In other words, it is to be assumed that any writer is trying to say what he means; the more expert he becomes, the more nearly he will approach the ideal of building the living organism of his idea into a living organism of expression, fitted to convey his thought and emotion to his reader. This does not at all imply that one must write according to some arbitrary rule, as the neoclassic poets and critics used to think; but it does mean that, as Coleridge so forcefully pointed out in his lectures on Shakespeare, each individual piece of writing must have a form appropriate to itself, a form that grows out of its own inner nature, and is as necessary to it as are the trunk, leaves, and branches to a tree.

Organic unity in the whole can be secured only through attention to unity of the parts. For, in good writing, just as there is a unity of the whole composition, so there is a unity of the divisions within the composition, of paragraphs within the divisions, and, finally, of sentences within the paragraph. Just as in a cathedral, even where there is great diversity and multiplicity of detail, every façade and spire and gargoyle, or in a painting, every line and shade

of color, should contribute toward a harmonious whole, so, in writing, the details of style down to the arrangement of every sentence and the choice of every word and syllable should be such as to work toward the desired effect.

Walter Page was evidently thinking of exactly this principle in a letter of advice on writing to his son Ralph:[1]

> Work every group of facts, naturally and logically grouped to begin with, into a climax. Work every group up as a sculptor works out his idea, or a painter, each group complete in itself. Throw out any superfluous facts or any merely minor facts that prevent the orderly working up of the group—that prevent or mar the effect you wish to present.
>
> Then when you've got a group thus presented, go over what you've made of it, to make sure you've used your material and its arrangement to the best effect, taking away merely extraneous or superfluous or distracting facts, here and there adding concrete illustrations—putting in a convincing detail here, and there a touch of color.

As Mr. Page here suggests, it is seldom that one can achieve the effect he desires at the first attempt. Unity can be secured but rarely by one who does not revise his work. Young writers often have not yet learned the priceless lesson that successful composition—the putting together of ideas in the best form possible—is usually the result of going over and over one's writing, altering, retouching, adding a little here, taking away something there, until a fine effect of rightness is secured. An old English painter maintained that a picture is finished when the artist begins to find that his touches do not any longer improve or when they begin to spoil. And so it is of writing; the work is never completed with assurance of perfection until nothing further for clarity, vigor, and charm can be done.

[1] To Ralph W. Page, March 12, 1918.

EXERCISES

1. The following theme written by a student upon the subject, *My Spring Vacation,* illustrates violation of the principle of organic unity, in that—

a. It is incomplete—details necessary to clearness and to a well-rounded account of the week are lacking. The theme does not make up a whole.

b. The parts of the theme are disjointed.

(1) They do not follow each other in a natural order.

(2) Even where ideas belong together there is often no articulation of parts: proper transitions are lacking so that whatever natural relationships exist are not shown.

c. What is true of the theme as a whole is true for the parts—the paragraphs and many of the sentences lack unity.

> I had intended to stay in Ann Arbor, during the holidays, but the call of spring soon caused me to migrate to the oil fields of Pennsylvania. I didn't arrive in Bradford until Saturday evening and I certainly had a long hunt before I found the people I had come to visit. My first night was rather eventful because I met a good many people, the majority of them knew people I did. Starting Monday, the Bradford delegation from Ann Arbor spent one hour of each morning studying. The remainder of the days were spent in long rides through the oil fields, parties at night but, best of all, long hours of sleep and rest. The most interesting part of my visit was the trip through the oil fields on foot. For some unknown reason the drilling of an oil well seems to be a very fascinating business. The hours are long and lonesome because there are only two men working on the well at one time. The exciting moment comes when the well is to be shot. What it will yield is a mystery. When the shot is set off and a golden flood belches forth from the earth the fascination of the oil fields seems to be explained. Easter Sunday in Bradford was a day to be remembered. Everyone was out in his new clothes, the churches were beautifully decorated, and the services were very good. The spirit of Easter

seemed to be in the air, and altogether it was a wonderful day.

This essay is, of course, badly written as a whole. It shows muddled thinking, careless planning, careless execution. These faults often go together.

Try your hand at rewriting this theme.

2. Criticize the three extracts given below from the point of view of unity. Where unity is violated, point out what is wrong, then rewrite, correcting the fault.

It is very difficult to set down a definite list and say, "These are the causes of child labor," for they are many, and vary in different communities. However, poverty and ignorance, which are both causes and results of youthful employment, are the two most common reasons given for child labor. In the home where poverty, past or present, has caused a low standard of living or ignorance of the value of education, one finds child labor most prevalent. In my opinion to one of these we can attribute the other. Physical deterioration, moral defects, and industrial waste, as well as poverty, result from premature employment. In a survey of one thousand one hundred sixty-eight children leaving school in Cleveland, Ohio, in one year, four hundred and thirty-nine left because of personal illness, twenty-nine because of illness in the family, thirty-three because of financial conditions, six because of physical defects, eighteen because of sheer indifference, one hundred and fifty-six left the city, three hundred and four went to work, one hundred eighty-one for miscellaneous reasons, and two because of failure to get promoted.

In the Iowa report of 1918, four thousand nine hundred and thirteen working permits were issued in the biennial period of 1916-1918. These figures together with many others of similar character show that thousands of our youths, who should be in school, are out toiling their lives away. Because they are brought up in this ignorance in nine cases out of ten the result will be poverty. Why? Because their little minds can grasp

nothing better than the continual grind and monotony of their work. Their ignorance will prevent them from bettering their conditions, or adding a useful life to their community.

From the time I was old enough to think at all seriously about a vocation up until eighteen months ago I seemed destined to follow the law. Not because of any unusual liking for the profession, but—and the reason I have will be found to be the same as that given for many heroes of popular stories—because I could "outargue" any other member of our family.

As I entered upon my last year in high school I was almost perfectly entrenched in my intentions to be a lawyer. I say "almost" because I had always had a sneaking curiosity about foreign trade; its possibilities, and the policies of the United States Government along such lines. Whenever I mentioned the subject, however, it was laughed down, and I was informed that foreign trade should be left to foreigners.

At this time the "American Boy" Magazine started to publish a series of interviews with men famous along their line of endeavor. Among the first of these interviews was a discussion of foreign trade, obtained from Dr. Julius Klein, in charge of such work at Washington. He spoke of the possibilities along this line as an employee of the government or as a representative of a private concern. Anyone can see what a bombshell that article was! With my parents I thrashed out the whole matter again, adding Dr. Klein's arguments and statements of fact to my small stock of reasons. And, with my powers of "bull-headed" argumentation, I won the day, though I doubt if I altered my parents' views of the matter. But a mere rehearsing of the matter again was not the only result of the article. My desire to poke about in odd parts of the globe was doubled a hundredfold when I realized that I could do so with a legitimate reason instead of as a tramp. As my desire was strengthened so my parents' objections were again begun with re-

newed vigor. Instead of making it a laughing matter they joined forces to put down, once and for all, this peculiar idea of mine. My father brought up, as his strong points, the luxuries I would be without and the hardships I would have to endure. My mother gave more sentimental reasons.

I am not definitely decided as to law or foreign trade, but that little magazine article may have a tremendous influence on my life. I may not enter the world on my own as a struggling young lawyer in Oshkosh, Wisconsin; my address may be a number on Prince Edward Street, Shanghai, China; or I may be a traveling salesman selling suspenders to the Persians.

The badger is one of the most extensive of subsoil workers. Some of his tunnels are a quarter of a mile long, and endlessly labyrinthed along the route.

Our American badger seems not to have adapted himself to civilization with the tenacity of his British cousins. Time was when badgers were common in Ohio, but to-day they hardly range eastward of Wisconsin. Not long ago, however, it was claimed that there were badgers in every county of England. It is easy to make a census of them, for a badger's earth is obvious; but it is difficult to see them, for the badger generally sleeps through the day, and his gray coat blends with the gray rocks when he does venture out. One British naturalist has attempted a count in Cornwall and reports 107 badgers' earths in that county. It seems an extraordinary thing that a slow-moving animal nearly three feet long should persist in settled England. But the badger has certain advantages; its young are born in March, but they never see light until June, when they have learned to fend for themselves. Some badger earths have been occupied for decades, although there is a tradition that a badger digs a fresh hole when he plans a family; but every earth goes through a spring and autumn housecleaning. And the dog which attempts to drag a badger from its den is in for a tough time, for the badger's teeth have a famous grip—so taut

that in crueler days badger-baiting, setting dogs to get bitten by and draw a badger from a barrel, was one of England's national sports and gave us the phrase still current, to badger.

The badger is one of England's oldest citizens—fossil remains have been found among Pleistocene deposits, millions of years old; the same species of badger ranges across all north Europe and Asia, and it has cousins to replace it in south Asia and Africa. It plays its part in the traditions of many peoples, and its fur fills many functions, from shaving-brushes to furniture covers.

3. Study the story of the funeral of Florence Mills in the next chapter for organic unity. Decide (1) whether it has unity of tone, (2) whether it has detailed stylistic unity—manner fitted to matter, part harmoniously blended with part,—(3) whether it has larger structural unity—the parts worked into one organic whole.

4. Study other stories and essays. Be on the alert to detect either the observance or violation of the principle of organic unity.

Chapter III

THE QUALITIES OF GOOD WRITING
(*Continued*)

I can't write a book which is commensurate with Shakespeare, but I can write a book by me.—WALTER RALEIGH, *Letters.*

IV

ORIGINALITY

EVERYBODY is agreed that good writing should show originality. But there are many misconceptions of what the term really means. Speaking accurately, there can be no such thing as complete originality. We can escape neither from the influence of our own times nor from the heritage of ideas handed down to us from numberless past generations. Pascal saw truly when he conceived of the human race as a progressive unity, the mind of each generation growing out of and developing upon that of all preceding ages. As individuals, our minds are made up of a vast complexity of ideas, the result of influences that have been flowing in upon us since birth—from people, books, newspapers, the world at large. As writers, we could not if we would escape from the rich inheritance in language and style and idea we have received from the literary masters of the past. Yet, even so, there is an originality possible to all, and we may say with confidence that he who does not achieve this originality will never become a writer worthy of mention.

In 1926, *Harper's Monthly Magazine* conducted its

first writing contest for college students. Eighty-four colleges competed, submitting a total of nearly three hundred manuscripts. The comments made by the editors in announcing the results revealed keen disappointment in the type of manuscripts submitted. And the secret of their disapproval, delicately suggested rather than fully expressed, lay in the discovery that the writers of these three hundred manuscripts really had nothing to say, that is, nothing authentic, nothing that the writer really knew anything about. "One conspicuous fact," write the editors, "was that only a handful of the essays and articles showed original thought upon the problem of college life or any other problems which the authors personally face." This was a distinct disappointment.

> There were more literary appraisals, more essays on the art of the Brontë sisters or the pantheism of Shelley than comments on the life being lived today under the very eyes of the competitors. As one of the Judges put it, "I'd rather read what one of these young men thinks of his father than what he thinks of Byron."

This is indeed pertinent comment on what is wanted of the young writer. But the editors did not find what they wanted, for "the fact remains," they lament, "that there was astonishingly little evidence that the undergraduates of today are looking about them with that observant, critical, and understanding eye which college training is supposed to develop, and using their powers of literary expression to speak their own minds on facts and conditions which they know at first hand." In other words, the manuscripts submitted in the Harper's Contest did not show originality.

Plagiarism the Antithesis of Originality.—It may help in showing what originality is to point out some of the things it is not. Now the complete antithesis of originality is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a nasty word. It is, in fact, simply another term for stealing. The plagiarist "lifts"

bodily from the writings of others, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or even larger units to which he has taken a fancy without so much as a hint as to his indebtedness by reference or quotation marks. Many young writers do not know that plagiarism is listed as a crime, that there are copyright laws providing for its detection and punishment. In schools and colleges, plagiarism when detected is usually punishable by expulsion or suspension. But the personal injury the plagiarist inflicts upon himself in deliberately appropriating the work of another as his own is greater than any external punishment he can suffer. He is warping his own individuality by openly confessing to himself that he has nothing of his own worth saying, and he is cutting himself off from any possible growth in personal power and originality.

Students sometimes inadvertently commit plagiarism through ignorance or through inability to draw the line between what is legitimate and what is illegitimate use of another's material. To build on what others have done or to quote from their works is often perfectly justifiable from the point of view of both ethics and practical results. There is, of course, great value in supporting one's ideas by quoting directly or in substance the words of another, and frequently we find a quotation that expresses what we want to say so perfectly that it would be weakness not to use it. To warn against plagiarism does not mean that one must avoid such quotations. But it does mean that whenever an author is quoted directly or wherever his ideas are consciously used, he should be given full and clear credit.

Imitation Opposed to Originality.—Imitation of the style of others is not originality, though imitating the style of great authors is obviously not so gross a violation of originality as plagiarism. It may in the end even be a help to individual expression; but there is great danger that indiscriminate copying will lead to weak artificiality,

at least to what is known as the "literary" style—a style that savors all too strongly of books, too little of sincere personal thought and feeling. The world is full of vain repetitions. "There are," says Goethe, "so few voices, so many echoes." But this phase of the subject will be treated at greater length in the section on Reading in the next chapter.

Search for Novelty not Originality.—Originality does not, as some people think, consist in the bizarre and strange. It is true enough that everyone should dislike the trite and stale. And nothing is more welcome than true freshness and spontaneity. But merely to be *different* is not enough; a craze for novelty never results in genuine originality; it rather breeds mawkishness and weakness. Longinus insisted many hundreds of years ago that "All improprieties in literature spring from one common cause, the rage for novelty in the expression of ideas."[1] When Longinus put the matter this way, he was simply voicing with great emphasis a regrettable truth applicable to almost any period in literature. There is much evidence of it today, when the same craze that has been responsible for exaggerated types of cubist and futurist and impressionistic painting has also given us prose with neither form nor reason, and poetry that reads like nonsense jingles. "Originality," says some one, "sought for its own sake is mere aberration." Independent response to subject matter and careful discipline of one's own powers assure originality, and they alone.

Originality Lies in Truth to Self.—We judge the quality of a writer not by the likeness of his work to that of an earlier or a contemporary author, but by his faithfulness to his own mind-life showing itself in his difference from other men. Men are of importance chiefly in so far as they differ from others, not in being like others. Distinction lies in writing unlike others, in not believing that the

[1] *On the Sublime.*

forms of expression have been exhausted. Distinction lies in difference, though not in difference so far away from the practice of others who have succeeded as to make the differing one appear to be eccentric, centrifugal, exotic, and hostile to the usual ways of men.

"Genius," said Emerson, "is the power to labor better and more availably." To study the methods and even the fine phrasing of another is interesting, and it is helpful; but it is more useful to cultivate the power to respond quickly and fully to what one sees, to remember accurately, and to use the gift of interpretation. And just as it is perhaps "better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all," so it is perhaps better eagerly to attempt to write well and not succeed, for, if we may believe Stevenson, to travel hopefully is frequently a better thing than to arrive. If one can by any effort succeed in transferring his very self to the written page he will have achieved something unique and interesting beyond praise.

The way to be original, then, is to be honestly and sincerely oneself. Everyone has something of his own to say and can find his own way of saying it if he will but turn to his own mind and his own experiences as a source, rather than to some literary model. As individuals we are all mentally different, just as our faces are different. A student who wrote grammatically correct but uninteresting papers once came to his instructor to ask how he could improve his work, and consequently raise his grade. He was told that his papers were commonplace and had no distinctive qualities; they read as if all the personal kinks of the writer had been carefully ironed out of them.

"But," the student protested, "I have no originality; I'm just like hundreds of other people who have read the things I have and seen the things that I have seen."

"Do you look exactly like anyone else, even like your closest relation?"

No, he did not. His voice was different. His work was

different. Not even his clothes were exactly like those of anyone else. His mind must be different too. He was soon convinced that no two persons were alike or ever saw exactly the same thing; that every person was unique; that every mind was unique, having reactions and associations distinctly its own. What this student needed was what everyone needs, confidence in himself—a just pride in his own gifts. His problem in the matter of writing lay in finding out his potentialities and in using them. We all need to be reminded once in a while, "To thine own self be true. . . ."

Ways to Be Original.—The question raised by this student is typical of those often put by discouraged young writers when asked to be "original." "What is there new to write?" they ask. "Where will one find a new subject when everything has been written about?" And at first glance this complaint appears a just one. Even in the fields of invention and discovery really new facts are comparatively rare: the airplane itself had been dreamed about, and talked about, and experimented with, centuries before the Wright brothers; and Greek scientists and philosophers like Anaxagoras anticipated by thousands of years many of our modern scientific conceptions. Indeed, one is often ready to exclaim with the Biblical writer that "there is nothing new under the sun!" But even granting that a student cannot in reason hope to uncover many new facts, he need not despair; he can still be refreshingly original if he but chooses.

In the first place, if he is but diligent enough and sufficiently alert he will find new facts at his very door. It is quite probable, for instance, that no one has ever made a survey and a compilation and analysis of the outside reading done among certain groups in the university—at the Law Club or at the Sigma Chi or Delta Epsilon fraternity, or on the campus in general. What papers and magazines are read? What proportion of students read

each one? What purposes do these students express, in choosing reading matter? A similar survey might be made to find how individuals of these same groups spend their time.

Matters of new fact of this kind lie open to any student willing to do a piece of intelligent investigation. Many possibilities lie in reading. An observing reader will often make discoveries that are well worth reporting. An alert student preparing a paper on Colley Cibber discovered that a certain critic writing about Cibber had described his appearance in practically the same terms others had used in picturing the actor Betterton. The critic had plainly made a slip. Here in itself was new material for a theme. Another student perceived that in the *Forsyte Saga* Galsworthy changes his style of punctuation and really develops a very useful system of single and double quotation marks to help distinguish between what a character thinks to himself and what he actually speaks. A second discovered that in referring to Irene in the same book, Galsworthy repeatedly describes her as "swaying." All such material is in its small way original, precisely as it is original to find for oneself that arrowheads are to be picked up just outside of town, or that there have been two "blind pigs" running on Tenth Street since 1920.

But originality is possible even where there are no new facts; it may be shown, for instance, in the way in which one organizes his subject matter. The very selection of materials, the choice of this fact or idea, the rejection of that, is an expression of individuality. Likewise with the approach to the subject and the point of view, the peculiar angle, from which the whole matter is considered. In fact, whenever a writer shows that his subject matter has really passed through his own mind and has received upon it the imprint of his own personality, even though this may manifest itself only in a new selection and organization of thought, he is to that extent showing originality.

A writer may reveal originality in the interpretation of his materials and in his ideas and manner of thought in reaction to his experiences. Two people look at the same sunset, but they do not both see the same things; nor would they interpret the scene alike if they stood on the same crowded city street, or on the deck of an ocean liner. Put a number of individuals side by side anywhere, in the mountains of Colorado, on the plains of Kansas, in the orange groves of California, or in the business district of Chicago or Detroit or San Francisco, and the personal reactions of any one of the group will be different from those of any other. And it is so in meeting people or in reading. A number of us may meet, say, General Pershing, Jane Cowl, or Carl Sandburg, or we may read the life of Napoleon, or of Byron, or the story of Henry Esmond, and almost invariably each one of us will have an individual and personal—an "original"—impression.

It is one of the things we do not understand, but even people of almost identical environment and similar general external experiences, such as the same home life, the same educational opportunities, and so forth, have entirely different mental experiences. They react differently to the same stimuli, feel differently, think differently, see the world and its phenomena in a different way. And the result is a unique, individual personality, differing, be it ever so slightly, from the personality of any one else in the world. Now to be original simply means to express one's individual self and one's individual way of looking at things, to give form to ideas as colored by one's own peculiar point of view and to emotions genuinely one's own. Alexander Smith aptly says in connection with Montaigne, "the peculiar character of his writing, like the peculiarity of all writing which is worth anything, arises from constitutional turn of mind."

Originality results from close observation, from training in the power to distinguish the peculiarity of things,

from seeing what others have missed, and expressing these things in one's own way. As Walter Raleigh put it to the young writer asking for advice, "Write what you have seen or known, or want to say." Only thus can a student develop independence in thought and expression. He must trust himself, in the way Emerson advises: must honor much the swift though seldom-appearing gleams that flash over his intelligence. Then he must search out ways to express his seeing with confident and complete veracity. To express one's own peculiar emotions and thoughts in their particularity is, says J. M. Murry, the essence of style. This, too, is originality.

Of originality in style, Lafcadio Hearn has this to say:

> The best way, I think, to meet the difficulty suggested will be to persuade oneself that sentiment, artistic feeling, absolute sincerity of the emotion and of the thought will guide the writer better than any rules as to what style ought to be used. If you try to imitate a model you will probably go wrong. All literary imitation means weakness. But if you simply follow your own feeling and tastes, trying to be true to them and to develop them as much as you can—then I think that your style will form itself and will naturally, without direction, take at last the particular form and tone best adapted to the subject.
>
> —*Talks on Writing.*

This must not suggest to the student that his method of saying things should be in the least flat or lacking in the force and suggestiveness of the great writers. A young man was looking down from a bluff upon the rippling surface of water asparkle in the moonlight. "What does that make you think of?" he inquired meditatively as if puzzling his brain for the right simile. And then after a pause, "It makes me think of a field of daisies in the wind." That is true originality of expression. The speaker had looked into himself and had found an expression that most clearly reflected his experience at the mo-

ment. He had actually asked himself what was in his mind, had not quoted some poet's handy phrase.

Literature is full of this sort of vivid original expression. There is such a comparison in Thomas Nash's *Unfortunate Traveler,* conveying a striking impression of dying men after a battle, where the writer pictures "the sprightly French sprawling and turning on the stained grass, like a roach new taken out of the stream." One finds many such original turns of thought in a writer like Galsworthy. When in *To Let* Galsworthy wants to show the continual presence of Fleur in her father's mind and the vividness with which she appears to him in imagination, he says, "And Fleur, always at the back of his thought, started out like a filagree figure from a clock when the hour strikes." And when he wishes to characterize that busy, energetic little body of a welfare worker, June Forsyte, he has Soames suddenly become "aware of a sort of human breeze—a short, slight form clad in a sea-green djubbah with a metal belt and fillet binding unruly red-gold hair all streaked with grey, . . . and something familiar riveted his gaze—in her eyes, her chin, her hair, her spirit—something which suggested a thin Skye terrier just before its dinner." And a moment later, he notes that "about her light, fly-away figure, passing so suddenly away, was a look of dangerous decisions."

There is no evidence of strain in these examples, but there is spontaneity and newness and truth. In each case the author is expressing the workings of an individual and unique mind, and the reader is pleased by the sense of fact in these metaphors; he instantly recognizes their validity as veracious replicas of experience. To a large extent they exemplify Galsworthy's own advice to a young writer, when he says:

> Now, as to style: Style is simply the clear, short expression of things seen originally, and of strangely individual feelings. Practice setting down what you see and feel as shortly and clearly as you

can. If you describe a tree or a haystack try to make others see it as you personally see it; it's your vision of it and feeling about it which will make it of value.[1]

EXERCISES IN ORIGINALITY

1. A freshman was asked to write an autobiographical sketch. Here is what he wrote. Study it for evidences of originality in attitude, material, and general treatment.

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

(When autobiography is demanded, I find it easier to write in the third person, rather than the first singular or plural. The third person imparts to my work that feeling of detachment which would be found, were someone else writing about me; and indeed it helps me to judge myself as I would be judged.)

In the first place, if one would understand fully Mr. Robert Wetzel, one must know something of his heredity. In his veins flows blood that is German; pure American; Scotch (the More clan); Irish; and perhaps Jewish. He is thus in a state of perpetual conflict, as his emotional, warm-hearted, slow-witted German self often clashes with his colder, keener Scotch self; and his romantic Irish self comes to the front only to be at odds with his shrewd Yankee self. Being a combination of so many races, he is unfortunately always able to see every side of the question, a thing fatal to decision. Often when he cannot decide which thing to do, like Hamlet he finally does nothing at all.

Again unfortunately, he is an only child, and so is spoiled, egoistic and selfish, and has a lack of filial piety akin to that revealed by Bernard Shaw; whose plays, by the way, he esteems more for their wit than for their drama.

And it is in the drama, or more properly the theatre, that his tastes center. He first entered a legitimate theatre

[1] "How to Become an Author," *Bookman,* March, 1927.

at the age of seven (the play was a musical comedy, "September Morn"!) and he has been going faithfully ever since.

He likes to draw, but would probably never be more than a dilettante, yet he summers at the Chicago Art Institute's art school. Stage settings intrigue him enormously, and he enjoys studying the plates of the master, Gordon Craig, and of his disciples, particularly Robert Edmond Jones.

His upbringing by a mother who knew books well is responsible for his interest in literature, which in the case of certain authors mounts to a passion. He likes the dramatists best, preferring Ibsen to Shakespeare. The Bard he esteems for his poetry; the Norwegian for his dramaturgy. He likes Molière, but was bored by the classic Greeks. He is fondest of the modern English drama, the plays of Barker, Barrie, Shaw, and Dunsany being favorites. He considers O'Neill the first of the Americans; and he takes great delight in the clever American satires of Messrs. Kaufman and Connelly, particularly the latest, "Beggar on Horseback."

But in the drama he is most interested in the art of the actor, and in proof of this he often wittingly goes to see a great actor in a poor play in preference to a poor actor in a great play. He would like more than anything else in the world to become an actor himself, but is somewhat handicapped by bad eyesight and an unprepossessing appearance. Of course he has his favorites among actors (such as O. P. Heggie and H. B. Warner) but at any time he would much rather be than see one. This dates from the time when an English teacher suddenly thrust him into the leading rôle in that perennial success, "Charley's Aunt"; he has never been quite the same since, and has played a variety of parts in amateur productions.

He likes to write short stories in particular, although for him it is always a laborious process. In high school he edited the paper, and because of a temperamental and torpid staff, wrote it all himself, acting as his own proof

reader. His reward was savage looks when the next issue did not appear on schedule.

He is not athletic, and although he would hardly tell it in Gath, he would rather see one poor play than ten good football games, however treasonable this may sound.

On his attitude toward women, it is scarcely enough to say that his favorite philosopher is Schopenhauer; for he sees the physical beauty of the sex, and judges every woman as a picture. When he wants cleverness and wit he turns to his own sex. In religion he is agnostic; but having been brought up with almost no religion, he will probably end a firm believer, such being the usual paradox.

2. Keep a notebook for the next week. Jot down in it an exact expression of a number of things that may cross your path—of the leaves of a tree in the breeze, of the atmosphere of a room, the appearance of some person—a hurt football player, a homesick student, a lovesick girl—a shady place by a river, water in sunlight, some of your own thoughts.

V

Sincerity and Restraint

No man is worth reading to form your style who does not mean what he says; nor was any great style ever invented but by some man who meant what he said.—Ruskin, *Lectures on Art.*

Find out the beginner of a great manner of writing, and you have also found the declarer of some true facts or sincere passions; and your whole method of reading will thus be quickened, for, being sure that your author really meant what he said, you will be much more careful to ascertain what it is that he means.—*Ibid.*

It is an axiom in criticism that good art should be unobtrusive. A turgid, strained style is revolting to good taste; it offends against our instinctive feeling for the natural and sincere and accurate. A style that is labored or a style that self-consciously cries aloud for attention is manifestly a bad style; like the artificial manners of shallow, superficial people it quickly breeds distrust and contempt.

Some of our modern writers fail here. In an attempt

to appear original, they betray themselves into silly excesses and mannerisms that violate at once the demands of sincerity, restraint, and accuracy. "The greatest fault of modern style," says one of our critics, "is that it is a smirking style. It fawns upon the reader, it insinuates, it has the manner of an amiable dog. If it does something smart, it stops immediately, wags its tail, and waits confidently for your approval. You will guess now why those little regiments of dots are scattered so liberally over the pages of the best-known English novelists. It is H. G. Wells' style wagging its tail." While this describes certain of our contemporaries, it is hardly fair to all, for the direction of English prose at its best in the last one hundred years has been toward a restrained and unaffected yet easy style, such as one finds in our greater writers, like John Galsworthy, Hugh Walpole, and Thomas Hardy. This ideal is to be found expressed in these words of counsel addressed by one of our most brilliant English authors to a young man beginning to write:

> . . . write simply and clearly; use few adjectives; never be involved; never indulge in purple patches. Be concise; shun wordiness, and above all, be clear, be clear, always clear.[1]

Good writing as distinguished from that which is bad can be best studied through examples. To compare for a moment the mannered and strained beside the simple and unaffected, let us place side by side descriptive passages from Disraeli and from Galsworthy. In *Vivian Grey,* Disraeli, describing a setting for a love episode, writes:

> The sun had already sunk behind the mountains, whose undulating forms were thrown into dark shadow against the crimson sky. The thin crescent of the new moon floated over the eastern

[1] R. B. Cunninghame Graham in "How to Become an Author," *Bookman,* March, 1927.

hills, whose deep woods glowed with the rosy glories of twilight. Over the peak of a purple mountain glittered the solitary star of evening. As the sun dropped, a universal silence seemed to pervade the whole face of nature. The voice of the birds was still; the breeze, which had refreshed them during the day, died away, as if its office were now completed; and none of the dark sounds and sights of hideous Night yet dared to triumph over the death of Day. Unseen were the circling wings of the fell bat; unheard the screech of the waking owl; silent the drowsy hum of the shade-born beetle! What heart has not acknowledged the influence of this hour, the sweet and soothing hour of twilight! the hour of love, the hour of adoration, the hour of rest! when we think of those we love, only to regret that we have not loved more dearly; when we remember our enemies only to forgive them!

Now read this passage from Galsworthy; in it also the scene is set for love and romance:

The dew fell and the flowers closed; cattle grazed on in the river meadows, feeling with their tongues for the grass they could not see; and the sheep on the Downs lay quiet as stones. Pheasants in the tall trees of the Pangbourne woods, larks on their grassy nests above the gravel-pit at Wansdon, swallows in the eaves at Robin Hill, and the sparrows of Mayfair, all made a dreamless night of it, soothed by the lack of wind. The Mayfly filly, hardly accustomed to her new quarters, scraped at her straw a little; and the few night-flitting things—bats, moths, owls—were vigorous in the warm darkness; but the peace of night lay in the brain of all daytime Nature, colourless and still. Men and women alone, riding the hobby-horses of anxiety or love, burned their wavering tapers of dream and thought into the lonely hours.

Fleur, leaning out of her window, heard the hall clock's muffled chime of twelve, the tiny splash of a fish, the sudden shaking of an aspen's leaves in the puffs of breeze that rose along the river, the distant rumble of a night train, and time and again the sounds which none can put a name to in the darkness, soft obscure expressions of uncatalogued emotions from man and beast, bird and machine, or, maybe, from departed Forsytes, Darties, Cardigans, taking

night strolls back into a world which had once suited their disembodied spirits.

—GALSWORTHY, *To Let.*

One need comment but little on the contrast presented in these two extracts. In Disraeli there is almost constant suggestion of the lurid and overwrought: such phrases as "hideous Night" triumphing over the "death of Day," such hectic constructions as those beginning with, "Unseen . . . unheard . . . silent," are strained and forced beyond the bounds of taste. Galsworthy shows none of this: there is the calm strength of mastery of his thought and mood. It is a style of calm control, yet of great power and beauty—that finest beauty the essence of which is an impression of unaffected truth.

In Disraeli it is easy to find examples of that specially objectionable narrative style which may be described as the artificially emotional. There is no better example than the love scene between Vivian Grey and Violet, for which the stage was set in the paragraph already quoted. Vivian had poured forth rapidly and incoherently "such words as men speak only once," and Violet had answered him.

He bent down, he kissed the soft silken cheek which now he could call his own; her head sank upon his breast. Suddenly she clung to him with a strong grasp. "Violet! my own, my dearest; you are overcome. I have been rash, I have been imprudent. Speak, speak, my beloved! say you are ill."

She spoke not, but clung to him with a fearful strength, her head still upon his breast, her full eyes closed. Alarmed, he raised her off the ground, and bore her to the river-side. Water might revive her.—He leant over her; he did not attempt to disengage her arms; and by degrees, by very slow degrees, her grasp loosened. At last her arms gave way and fell by her side, and her eyes partly opened.

"Thank God! Violet, my own, my beloved, say you are better!"

She answered not, evidently she did not know him, evidently she did not see him. A film was on her sight, and her eye was glassy. He rushed to the water side, and in a moment he had sprinkled her temples, now covered with a cold dew. Her pulses beat not, her

circulation seemed suspended. He rubbed the palms of her hands, he covered her delicate feet with his coat; and then rushing up the bank into the road, he shouted with frantic cries on all sides. No one came, no one was near. Again, with a cry of fearful anguish, he shouted as if a hyena were feeding on his vitals. No sound; no answer. The nearest cottage was above a mile off. He dared not leave her. Again he rushed down to the water-side. Her eyes were still open, still fixed. Her mouth also was no longer closed. Her hand was stiff, her heart had ceased to beat. He tried with the warmth of his own body to revive her. He shouted, he wept, he prayed. All, all in vain. Again he was in the road, again shouting like an insane being. There was a sound. Hark! It was but the screech of an owl.

And this swollen rhetoric goes on for another paragraph until Vivian realizes what has happened: the "horrible truth seized upon his soul. He gave a loud shriek and fell on the lifeless body of *Violet Lane*."

This is very bad writing. There is too much waving of the arms, too much gesticulating and shouting in an evident effort to work up a scene. But it won't do. The excess of laconic parallelism and the wringing out of the absurdly dramatic phrases, "She spoke not," "Her pulse beat not," together with the introduction of the element of terror in the screech owl, all too palpably betray the strain for effect, and, like wails of hired mourners at a funeral, they leave us cold.

It is, however, a kind of thing in which young writers often indulge in an attempt to be effective. It is a species of "fine writing." An example of this straining for effect occurs in the following from a student's theme. Note the conventional phrasing, the overused and "tired" words.

A prickly sensation stole over me. My body became cold and hot by turns. I gasped for breath. My knees trembled. I felt as if my eyes would burst from their sockets. My hands were clenched until the nails dug into my palms. I wanted to run, but seemed frozen to the spot. My legs refused to obey the message of my brain. At last fright left me, and I was able to continue my walk,

although I could not erase from my mind the horrible act that I had witnessed, and for many weeks I would awake suddenly in the night with the same terrible sensation.

In contrast with this and with the passage from Disraeli, let us place one of Thomas Hardy's scenes in which love and death also figure, and let us study his method of handling such a situation.

In *The Woodlanders*, to shield his once affianced bride from a possible hint of compromise and scandal, Giles Winterbourne has given up his cottage to Grace Fitzpiers, now fleeing from her husband; he has subsequently become seriously ill through exposure in a rackety shed during a cold rainstorm, and is now raving in a delirious fever.

Grace's distraction was almost as great as his. In a few moments she firmly believed he was dying. Unable to withstand her impulse, she knelt down beside him, kissed his hands and his face and his hair, exclaiming in a low voice, "How could I? How could I?"

. . . . .

All that a tender nurse could do, Grace did; and the power to express her solicitude in action, unconscious though the sufferer was, brought her mournful satisfaction. She bathed his hot head, wiped his perspiring hands, moistened his lips, cooled his fiery eyelids, sponged his heated skin, and administered whatever she could find in the house that the imagination could conceive as likely to be in any way alleviating. That she might have been the cause, or partially the cause of all this, interfused misery with her sorrow.

. . . . .

Grace rose from her attitude of affection, and bracing her energies, saw that something practical must immediately be done.

That something practical was to go for a doctor,—in this case her unfaithful husband from whom she was in hiding. The doctor comes and makes an examination:

"He is dying," he said with a dry expression.

"What?" said she.

"Nothing can be done, by me or any other man. It will soon be over."

"But it cannot be! He was well three days ago."

"Not well, I suspect. This seems like a secondary attack, which has followed some previous illness. . . ."

"Ah—he was not well—you are right. He was ill—he was ill when I came."

There was nothing more to do or say. She crouched down at the side of the bed, and Fitzpiers took a seat. Thus they remained in silence, and long as it lasted she never turned her eyes, or apparently her thoughts, at all to her husband. He occasionally murmured, with automatic authority, some slight directions for alleviating the pain of the dying man, which she mechanically obeyed, bending over him during the intervals in silent tears.

Winterbourne never recovered consciousness of what was passing; and that he was going became soon perceptible also to her. In less than an hour the delirium ceased; then there was an interval of somnolent painlessness and soft breathing, at the end of which Winterbourne passed quietly away.

There is no artificiality in all this, only a quiet, intense portrayal of scene and emotion. And the reader responds. There is more conveyed to him in the restrained "She crouched down at the side of the bed," than in all the hysteria of Vivian Grey. Without attempting to force emotion, Hardy quietly generates it by accurately presenting a picture of life as it is at a tense moment. And he does not need mannerisms or rhetorical device to aid him. It is thus that great writers work.

Let it be repeated here, however, that it is not to be understood that any one style can be prescribed for all writers. Vehement, headlong thinkers like Carlyle, much given to strong moral feeling and earnest ratiocination, will inevitably carry into their writings the rush and impetuosity natural to them, yet even in Carlyle the best results reveal restraint; that it is such control as is to be observed in the restless, but repeated and half regular inrush of breakers after a storm makes it no less an admirable illustration of the principle of which we are speaking.

And so even in very romantic and high-pitched works, the better writers always exercise remarkable control, and though they may with fitness write with some appearance of extravagance, there is really no waste motion, no real excess.

Likewise with the "rhetorical style, ornamental without being exactly poetical," which, as Lafcadio Hearn points out, is especially fitted for argument and the philosophical essay. While not at all bare and simple, it too may be sincere and restrained.

The point is, of course, that different styles are suited to different subject matter, and that as the materials vary, the style should probably vary with them. But no matter what the particular type of style, whether it be plain and simple, rhetorical, or poetical, it should, for its kind, be controlled, with evidences of unused reserve power behind it. No other style is a strong style.

There is nothing in the restrained style antagonistic to forceful writing. In fact, strength and restraint are usually found together. This happy combination was aptly suggested by Quintilian. Let our style, he said, "be manly, noble, chaste—let it glow with genuine health and vigor." Restraint means the application of the fine Greek ideal of moderation—"In nothing too much." "It is not so deep as a well, nor yet so wide as a church," bravely gasps the dying Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet,* "yet 'twill serve," a speech which in example and precept perfectly illustrates the principle of restraint. "'Twill serve!" 'Twill serve to stir the blood, to break the heart, to kill, yet all is quiet and controlled. Says Keats in his poem, having brought the sweetheart to her murdered lover's grave, where after three hours' work the dead man's face is revealed, "And Isabella did not stamp and rave." And nowhere does Keats write a line of fact more truthful and powerful than that.

A student began a narrative with this statement, "An

old woman sat at her bare table enduring the winter." That was a splendid sentence. It was packed with connotation. "An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought," declares Dryden. This student could have taken a chapter to describe this old woman and her living quarters, but the one sentence was enough; it was "all he ought." It set the imagination to work, to construct for itself the poverty, the rags, the hunger, the desolation of this poor creature. When a writer can do that in one sentence it is pure redundance "to write all he can."

This plain kind of style seems especially fitted for narrative. The simple, naked style of Biblical stories and of many of the tales of primitive people that have come down to us will never cease to be admired. In one of Lafcadio Hearn's essays in which he retells an old romantic story, there is a sentence unforgettable in the quality of perfect suggestiveness: "Then they proceeded upon their journey through a great wilderness in which 'nothing existed but grass and the glory of God.'" [1] Perhaps with such a sentence of simple, quaint, sincere power it is well to close this section. There could be no finer example of appropriate style to be left ringing in the ears of the student of composition, to guide him in his own attempts to write with mastery and taste.

EXERCISES IN SINCERITY AND RESTRAINT

W. A. Macdonald's story of the funeral of Florence Mills, published in the *Boston Evening Transcript,* November 7, 1927, was awarded first place in *The Bookman's* prize contest for the best newspaper story of the month. The comments of Mr. Paul Patterson in making the award show that his decision was based to a large extent on the fact that Mr. Macdonald wrote his story with restraint. Mr. Patterson said in part: [2]

[1] *Literature and Life,* p. 341.
[2] *The Bookman,* February, 1928, pp. 646, on.

It is more difficult to get a finely written story showing the proper restraint on a big news event than one dealing with some incidental phase of daily life. The tendency of the reporter assigned to a "big story" is to over-write. He knows he is expected to turn out a story that will be distinguished for its literary qualities and dramatic values, and too often the result is over-emphasis and a splurge of adjectives. It was the application of this second point that led to the decision in favor of Mr. Macdonald's account of the funeral of Florence Mills.

The first-class reporter is expected not merely to "cover" the essential, obvious phases of his story, but also to seek out, on his own initiative, all incidents that will help to make his picture complete. In this respect Mr. Macdonald showed admirable judgment by turning from the scene around the coffin to the sharply contrasting scenes in the cabarets and streets of Harlem in which Florence Mills had been such a familiar figure. The deft manner in which he led up to the startling climax of the Negro revelers dancing to a dirge is most effective. Even when Mr. Macdonald got into the emotional scenes, as singers and spectators were giving away to hysteria in the church, his restraint was in evidence. As, for example, in this passage describing the singing of Juanita Stinnette:

"The singer wavered and regained control. Louder and louder she went on. She was leaning toward the bank of flowers that hid the casket. She was addressing the little dancer who lay therein. High and loud rang the last note. Down in a heap went the singer, screaming. The white glove of an usher covered her mouth as they bore her out. A quiver sighed through the church. From outdoors came the noise of the crowd."

It is not easy to forget the picture of the usher's white-gloved hand pressed over that black face.

1. Study this story as an example of restrained writing, which nevertheless has a strong emotional appeal. Point out passages where a writer with less self-control would have "let himself go" in "fine writing" and sob-producing phrases.

Harlem Says Bye Bye Honey to Florence Mills

By W. A. Macdonald

(*From the Boston Evening Transcript, Monday, November 7, 1927*)

On Saturday night the line outside the undertaking chapel in Harlem was still there. Only now it was longer than it had been since the body of Florence Mills was brought there in the middle of the week. It began for the day in the middle of the morning; it dissolved for the night at two o'clock on the morning of Sunday. There it was on Saturday before the stone building at the corner of Seventh avenue and 137th street, where a cardboard sign on the door said "Remains of Miss Mills on View at One o'Clock. 'The Family.'" There were no police there then because the crowd was small. It grew so fast that the doors were opened two hours before the cardboard's time. They wanted all to go in at once, but quiet-voiced young men at the door ordered that it form in line.

Mostly these were colored people; a few were white. Mostly they were poor; their clothes showed that. They moved slowly into the chapel and down the aisle. There were old women, young women, pretty girls, children. An elder Negress complained from the steps that white people had come saying they were from out of town and had been admitted, while "They push we out." Someone hushed her. This was the fourth day that this line had passed through the chapel. A white truck driver in a soiled leather jacket took the butt of a cigar from his mouth as he went in. A tall young policeman, his bright hair gleaming in the dim light, walked down the aisle, his hands on the shoulders of a little colored boy to whom he leaned down and spoke. Except for the sound of shuffling feet the room was still.

Thousand by thousand the people of Harlem were looking for the last time at Florence Mills. It was such a fleeting look. In the great copper coffin lay the figure

of the little dancer, her dress silver, her thin legs in gray. Her dark, short face was a rounded square.

CANDLES REFLECTED IN COPPER

Two tall white candles burned above the metal coffin. One stood at the head, one at the foot. The melted wax had formed in corrugations down their sides. In the background were banks of flowers. A hundred thousand dollars' worth of flowers before the day was over. From all the world that knew her came the flowers by cable, by telegraph, by messengers direct from those who had selected their tribute with loving care. Hour by hour the thousands moved before them. They waited, slowly moving, outside the building in the cold rain of dreary morning; they were patiently going on through the clearing afternoon; they were lengthening their line through the cold evening under the stars in the sky above Harlem. At seven o'clock at night they extended through One Hundred and Thirty-Seventh street for nearly a block. And more were coming all the time.

Meantime Harlem was going on with its other life. It is the greatest Negro city in the world. From just north of Central Park up to the end of Manhattan, more than two hundred thousand Negroes are gathered in an unbroken community, most of which was to be crowded into the streets about the Mother Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church for the funeral on Sunday. Up and down Seventh avenue strolled the life of Harlem stepping a little more quickly as the cold wind nipped. People gathered in the theaters, where Florence Mills had sung and danced; they laughed at actors of their own color. Girls of the chorus did their stuff for the appreciation of good-humored audiences. A pair of Negroes on one stage played a silent, tricky poker game while the audience exploded with laughter. And the manager, standing in back of the darkened house, laid a hand on a man's sleeve. "Success never changed her; you know that. When she

was here she was always the same. She never wanted any special favor, any star's dressing room even after she began to make a hit. She might have been one of the chorus if you saw her back stage. You know that. She never owned an automobile for all the money she made. She would take her nickel and walk to the subway. She didn't ride in taxicabs. And she was a fine woman.

HER LAST PARTY

"She and her husband were a happy couple. They went everywhere together. One thing about Florence Mills, she always did her best. When she was in the Harlem theaters she always did her best. She was a hard worker, no gay parties, never spoiled, and she was good to her mother." The manager paused; he was deeply moved. "You know that," he said. "Well, you want to see the show."

It is midnight when Harlem begins to gather at the night clubs. Harlem and its visitors from the rest of New York. Here was a club that had been going only a month and it was filling with people at midnight. They were gay people; they sat briefly at the tables and then took to the floor. Or they hung in seated groups and talked. On the walls, blue against yellow, were the decorations of Aaron Douglas, primitive figures in praise or passion. A wild angular savage poised a bulbous stick above a tomtom, another looked to heaven, another leaned against a jungle tree. The walls were covered with them. Everyone knew Florence Mills here. Not two weeks ago she was here with her husband.

"No, I haven't been to see her," said one man in a quiet voice. "I wanted to remember her as I saw her here. She was so bright that night; I want to remember her that way. There will never be another Florence Mills. There was something about her you can't find again." He waited a moment. "She was a great woman," he said. Jazz welled up from the orchestra.

A girl was going from table to table, singing to each

group. The song ran low, then rose in high crescendo and diminished again. The girl was singing:

Sometimes I'm happy
Sometimes I'm blue.
My disposition
Depends on you.

DIRGE AT NIGHT

She smiled as she sang; she made it sound very personal to the people of each table. And then at about two o'clock in the morning the orchestra began a dance tune that was different from the rest. Swaying couples moved slowly on the floor in the press. Smoke from hundreds of cigarettes spired upward from the tables. The dance music was slow; it was the long deliberate beat of the tomtom; it was measured and savage and processional. The couples, pressed close together, danced to its deliberate beat. It was a dirge!

On Sunday morning groups gathered in homes in Harlem. They were her friends; they talked about her. There was an editorial in *The World* when she died which contained a line about her having just begun her career. Absurd, an idle opinion might have said. She had been starred in Europe and America. She had come up from the night clubs, the obscure theaters, to a place where everyone in the world knew her. But Harlem liked the line in that editorial. The American public, said a man in one group, had never had an opportunity to hear Florence Mills since she had had the benefit of voice teaching in Europe. She had been good before, what would she have been in the future? She was to have sung next February with Symphony Orchestra in concert in Boston. She was to have gone with Ziegfeld's Follies. It was true, she had just begun.

They talked about her in this house in Harlem and no tears came—but almost. These were people who knew her well. "I went to the hospital to see her," said one man. "That's what's worrying me now. I wish I could

remember her as she was that night at the club." He spoke of his friend, her husband. "He doesn't show much; he is not a man who shows what he feels. But twice he swayed and made a sound yesterday. All he said was, 'What a tough break. . . . If this isn't the toughest break. . . .'" They had made each other, Florence Mills and her husband. They were always together.

"BABY, YOU'VE COME HOME TO DIE"

She came home to New York from Europe only little more than a month ago. She had been ill, but was better. She looked better than for years. She came off the ship with a great bouquet of American Beauty roses. But her old mother met her and took her in her arms. "Baby, you've come home to die." And when she was dead and they came to tell her mother, she was already crying. "You don't need to tell me," she said. "One of my children is dead." She was ill herself and had not been told of Florence's illness, but she knew that one child had gone, although she was not sure which one. She had only thought that she would die before any of her children.

The crowd gathered again on Sunday morning at the chapel to wait for the procession to the church. The funeral was set for one o'clock, but the crowd was there at half-past ten. It lined the sidewalks waiting. At the church it thickened and became impenetrable. Thousand upon thousand it grew. People leaned out the windows as far as the eye could see. They gathered on fire escapes and on roof tops. The morning service of the church was not out until noon and those who were inside didn't want to leave. Downstairs the floor was reserved for those who had cards of admission, of which nine thousand had been issued. The capacity of the church is twenty-three hundred and fifty. Outside people were trying to get in; inside people were reluctant to leave. There was noise in the church, the noise of a great crowd talking, sometimes laughing a little in groups. Where so much stress existed it was a relief to find a seat at last and people

reacted normally to it. At one o'clock the assistant pastor spoke in a loud voice with dignity. "You must remember two things," he said, "that you are in the House of God and, second, the purpose for which you are assembled." For a moment it was quiet again.

LIKE WIND AND STORM AT SEA

Melville Charlton, the distinguished Negro organist, was at the organ. Out of it came a soft thread of sound. Then at two o'clock, faint in the distance, "Rock of Ages" found its way into the crowded church. It stopped and the Chopin march rose and swelled and diminished and grew again. Slowly, oh so slowly, down the aisle with the music came forty girls, bareheaded and wearing their outdoor coats, and their arms were burdened with the white and crimson of flowers; they bore lilies and roses and ferns and oak leaves that rustled in stillness that for an instant was utter except for this and the sob of the music. And behind them, higher than their heads came a great bank of roses that covered the copper coffin of Florence Mills. The pastor, Rev. Mr. Brown, walked with it, reading aloud, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

A sound like wind and storm on sea was the crowd outside.

The girls who bore the flowers stood in rank. They were pretty. They were friends of Florence Mills. Some of them stifled sounds as they took their breath. Through the church ran a quiver of crying. Perfume of flowers came up the aisle. The vested choir led the hymn, "Earth has no sorrow but heaven can remove." In the choir loft a woman in the front row pressed her white sleeve over her face, then grasped for the back of her neck with one hand and threw the other hand straight above her head as she fell backward. Arms were waiting to catch her. The choir went on. Women wearing red crosses on their white veils moved about the congregation.

The minister was reading: "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I will not leave you comfortless.

. . ." Then the Twenty-Third Psalm, while the organ wove an ethereal woof of tone for background of the words. "We thank Thee that Thou are not far but near . . . Do Thou speak and touch and ease these wounded hearts, mother, husband, relatives, and friends."

Choir and congregation sang "Time and Eternity," the voices a great swell. "I would not live alway."

"DEEP RIVER"

Eight girls in gray who had come coatless from the chill afternoon were stars of the Negro theater, friends of Florence Mills. Ethel Watters, Cora Green, Edith Wilson, Gertrude Saunders, Maude Russell, Ada Ward, Lena Wilson, and Evelyn Preer, they listened while the story they knew so well was read to the congregation, the story of the life of Miss Mills, the dates of her birth and death, the names of the shows she had worked in. She was born in Washington thirty-two years ago, she had been with "Shuffle Along," with the Plantations Club, to England with Lou Leslie's "Blackbirds," and the rest of it. She had come home the picture of health. On Monday her husband gave his blood to save her.

The Carolina choir from one of the theaters sang "Deep River." The burden of the music was carried by a tall young woman whose deep contralto rose from the humming underbeat of the choir. She held her hands clasped before her breast, a motionless figure singing clearly the moving music. A tall young man, the leader, conducted with long hands outspread toward his choir. Tense and tall, he pulled the music toward him, the undertone of many voices, the clear voice of the contralto who stood with tight-clasped hands.

The gust of noise through the doors was the storm of the crowd outside. A hundred thousand, a hundred and fifty thousand people were there in a colored sea five blocks long. Once a gust of laughter came from the sea. The pastor spoke of the loss to the race, an actress gifted by nature, a personality striking and charming, a woman

whose success had never spoiled her poise and dignity, a daughter who never forgot her mother. "A promise is made unto all such sons and daughters." Our actors, said the pastor, better the relations between the races, they interpret our spirit to others. Very beautifully he read "Crossing the Bar" and the spirit of twilight and evening bell descended upon that congregation.

I HEARD OF A CITY CALLED HEAVEN

There were telegrams from distinguished persons, cablegrams, too. In the balcony there was a face that sickened, a head that drooped on the nearest shoulder. Mrs. Louise Howard sang "Face to Face" and a baritone, A. A. Haston, "Flee as a Bird," Julius Bledsoe's tenor went on in "Lead Kindly Light." Jessie Zackery sang "Come Unto Me." And Juanita Stinnette of the stage team of Chappelle and Stinnette stood forth to begin a song that her partner had written for this funeral. The singer wavered and regained control. Louder and louder she went on. She was leaning toward the bank of flowers that hid the casket. She was addressing the little dancer who lay therein. High and loud rang the last note. Down in a heap went the singer, screaming. The white glove of an usher covered her mouth as they bore her out. A quiver sighed through the church. From outdoors came the noise of the crowd.

There was more music; solos and the Carolina choir singing, "I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow. . . . I heard of a city called Heaven. I started to make it my home." The tall contralto clasped her hands and sang, the tall young conductor pulled the sound toward him. The congregation rose as the pastor read the service. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust. People struggled with their coats. The bearers lifted the great copper coffin. High above the heads of people the bank of roses moved slowly down the aisle. The people pushed out into the greater crowd outside. Block after block it jostled for position. Along 137th street to the corner of Seventh avenue moved the procession and past the corner, where all traffic was stalled

on the avenue. As it passed through that crowding sea the hats of Harlem came off. You could see it as a great movement along the avenue. An airplane roared overhead. The police whistles shrilled, sharp, imperative. Automobiles moved noisily at the sound.

Florence Mills, to whom the little chorus girl, leaning over the casket, had said "Bye, bye, Honey," rode up Seventh avenue.

2. Read two stories, one in the magazine section of your next Sunday paper, one in *Harper's, Scribner's,* or *The American Mercury*. Bring in examples from these stories which seem to you to represent (1) the turgid and artificial style, (2) the sincere and controlled style.

3. Write a story of some stirring, emotional scene. When you have finished, go through it and mark the places where you have not shown restraint. Revise these in the direction of a fine, strong control. It may be enough simply to make substitutions for certain expressions, or to cross them out entirely—words like *terrible, awful, horrible, magnificent, gorgeous,* phrases like *frozen with fear, too awful to be borne, swooned with joy,* etc.

4. In all your writing, without being obscure ever, make it a point to leave something for the reader to supply. Rely upon his intelligence. Trust him to get your idea without "rubbing it in" too much. Avoid useless phrases, repetition of the obvious, etc.

Chapter IV

PREPARATION FOR WRITING

THERE are two kinds of preparation for writing: the general, which has to do with all those things which furnish a foundation and background for any kind of writing one may do; and the specific, which includes the definite reading, observing, thinking, and so forth, necessary to get ready for some certain article, essay, or story. This chapter is mainly concerned with general preparation. Suggestions for the more specific types of preparation are given in the sections on The Longer Composition.

I

Experiencing Life

Unless a man has lived and felt and experienced, and generally found out what life means, he has nothing to say that's worth hearing.—John Galsworthy, *How to Become an Author.*

. . . . live as fully as possible, mixing with all kinds of people; write constantly and burn most—or all—of what you write a month later.—Lennox Robinson.

Inexperienced writers commonly underestimate the amount and misjudge the quality of preparation needed for good writing. Water cannot be pumped from a dry well, nor will ideas flow from an empty brain, chew one's pencil as wisely as one may. In the larger sense, preparation for any given piece of writing consists in the sum total of one's previous thoughts, emotions, and experiences, added

to whatever special preparation in the way of working up specific material may be necessary. "First in the orator is the man himself," taught Quintilian, meaning that unless there is largeness of mind, depth of insight, and sincerity of heart, the words of a man will ring hollowly and fall ineffectively upon the ears of his hearers.

What a man is—the sum of his thoughts, his emotions, his mental habits—is indeed the most determinative single factor in his writing. This means that to write well one must have prepared all his life. "Writing well is at the same time perceiving well, thinking well, and saying well," declared the French critic Buffon. But one can neither learn to perceive well, nor think well, nor say well in a day. Buffon's formula, simple as it may sound, demands for its fulfillment years of the most exacting mental activity. One must *live*—must be alert—must be sensitive to the world of nature, to beauty, to people, to ideas.

This requires, first of all, that the writer shall learn to observe carefully and accurately, and shall make use of what he observes that he may bring to his writing many first-hand materials—facts, memories, experiences—and so set down not what he imagines or what some one else has said, but what he has actually stored in his own mind.

Interesting people are those who have an eye for detail and the happy faculty of accurate delineation of what they have seen and lived through. As with the interesting person in general, so with the interesting writer. He is one who sees much and can report what he sees. If this report is to be of value, however, the seeing must be with understanding. The good writer is one with an understanding heart. Understanding is a product of close observation plus meditation and insight. It is the result of a certain mental reaction to facts; it comes at moments of illumination when these facts are seen in their right relationship to each other and so have meaning. John Henry Newman

calls this "learning." It is accompanied by what he terms "an enlargement of the mind."

Newman defines this enlargement of the mind as

> . . . the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence. . . . It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else; it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning. . . .
>
> —*Idea of a University.*

As applied to composition, all this, translated into somewhat simpler language, means that a writer's grasp of his subject must be a far more thorough one than can be had from casual study and superficial observation. It must consist of not only an understanding of the subject in itself but an understanding of it in connection with other subjects. In other words, the writer must know what he is talking about.

Of our great writers, Shakespeare probably possessed the most of this ability. His works show such rich maturity of intellect and insight that Emerson could truthfully write of him,

> One would say Shakespeare must have been a thousand years old when he wrote his first piece, so thoroughly is his thought familiar to him, so solidly worded, as if it were already a proverb, and not only hereafter to become one.
>
> —*Art and Criticism.*

Emerson meant here that even at thirty years of age Shakespeare wrote as one who *knew;* he spoke as one with deep understanding, his thoughts appearing to have all the maturity of one who had been accumulating wisdom for ten hundred years. There is but one way to possess

such mastery. Even the genius can write in this manner only after the truth he is talking about has become real to him, that is, after he has experienced the life and relationships he portrays in his plays, novels, or poems.

"Nothing is real until we have experienced it," once declared Keats. "Even a proverb is no proverb until life has illustrated it." This does not mean that a writer must have actually lived through in flesh and blood all the events he describes; much may be lived in the mind—imaginatively. This mental experience is in part the enlargement of mind of which Newman wrote in his discussion of the relation between *knowledge* and learning. It is the condition of even the most partial degree of real understanding. As Newman explains,

> The enlargement consists not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and toward and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our acquirements; it is a making of the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow. . . . We feel our minds to be growing and expanding then, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already.
>
> —*Idea of a University.*

Here is a partial description of the sort of mental experience that lies behind good writing. To a college freshman, this may sound like hard doctrine. But it need not. The mind of every boy and girl with a normal intellect has been subject to such enlargements as Newman is talking about, since earliest childhood. Otherwise one would "understand" nothing; and it is safe to say that

everyone understands something, if it is only the mysterious ways of a Ford car, or a father's probable reaction to a request for a check. As we get older and wiser we understand more complex things—we perceive the relationship between ancient civilization and our own, for instance, or realize more fully the meaning of war, or see more deeply into people. But this is a matter of degree, rather than kind. We may be certain that every student who has finished high school has had some experience that has sunk in and has brought illumination. And the application of this to writing is that one should talk of that which he has in some way lived through and which means the most to him. The difficult thing is to make the beginner see that such experiences are important and worth writing about. We are all too prone to underestimate and overlook the thing that lies nearest at hand.

Young people often imagine that in order to gain the necessary experience to write, the kind of experience Newman talks about, they must travel and see the world; but this is really not true. For the purposes of gathering materials for writing, the man who stays at home and observes closely and accurately, and who reflects upon what he sees, will have infinitely more that is worth while to write about than he who has been around the world ten times without so using his eyes and mind. Thoreau, who had "traveled much, chiefly in Concord," had more interesting and useful things to say than ninety-nine per cent of the globe-trotters of the world. The Brontë sisters had never traveled widely, but they were able to write novels that will live as long as the English language. They could do this because they knew how to use their eyes, and think. They knew how to make explorations into the lives of people they knew, and shed light upon them. This is not to deny the great potential value of travel: it is merely to deny its absolute necessity, and to assert the greater

essentiality of really experiencing the life through which we are passing, whatever its nature, wherever it may be. It is one of the objects of good writing to perceive and interpret the significance of the commonplace, to make it interesting; in other words, to use the metaphor of Isocrates, "to make of motes mountains."

It is also one of the functions of good writing to portray great and striking things in their full significance. If there is room in literature for Wordsworth's daffodils and cuckoos, his Lucys and Matthews, there is also quite as much of a place for the Mont Blancs and Oceans, the Electras, and Lears, and Fausts. The real point is that whatever one writes about, whether it be his dog, his pipe, his favorite sport, his mother, an incident of his childhood, or some important historical event, he should first be certain that it means something to him; that is, he should try to write about the things he has experienced most deeply, whose relationships are clearest to him, those things, in short, which he best understands.

If he is compelled to write upon subjects of which he knows little, as students often are in examinations, term papers, and so forth, the best thing to do, of course, is to master his material as thoroughly as possible in the limited time he has for preparation. Concentration in such cases will work wonders. Most of us give up too soon when we strike something hard. We admit defeat and surrender at sight of the first barbed wire entanglement, when we ought to charge straight through. The most stubbornly abstruse subject will often become clear in the flash of an eye if we but study and meditate upon it closely enough. We see it then in a new way, with new relationships to ourselves and to other subjects. After this sort of illumination, in which one has really experienced a subject, the problem of writing is a comparatively simple one.

II

Thinking

An obscure and vague manner of expression is always and everywhere a very bad sign. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it comes from vagueness of thought; . . . when a right thought springs up in the mind, it strives after expression and is not long in reaching it; for clear thought easily finds words to fit it. If a man is capable of thinking anything at all, he is also always able to express it in clear, intelligible, and unambiguous terms.—Arthur Schopenhauer, *On Style.*

"I try to think well in order to write well," declared Flaubert. It is impossible to divorce good writing from right thinking; we cannot, therefore, stress too much the value of logical and clear habits of thought to the student of composition. He who does not think clearly will never learn to write clearly. For, in the matter of composition, it may be emphatically said that out of the mind are the issues of life—and if the source be muddy how can the stream itself be pure?

"Is there something I can read that would help me write better?" asked a freshman of his rhetoric instructor. "No," replied that young man decisively; "your whole problem just now is to learn to think a thing through. Until you do that nothing can help you. It isn't a question of having ideas either," he continued thoughtfully; "you have ideas, too many sometimes, but you don't arrange them, and you don't isolate them. What you need to do is to learn to take one idea and follow it until it leads you somewhere. Unless you do that you cannot learn to write."

The instructor was wholly right. A will-o'-the-wisp mind that leads one's thought lightly hither and yon is destructive to good writing. "Style," says Lafcadio Hearn, "means thinking." And it is precisely true that the whole character of a man's mentality reveals itself in one piece of his written work. Fuzzy-minded folk write in a fuzzy-minded way, just as, provided he has learned the proper

technique, the clear-thinking individual writes with lucidity. Most enviable is such a one as Carlyle's father, whom his son described as "one who loved the sunlight of exact truth and told his own clear thought in potent words."

It is fortunate to begin to think early in life. Roger Ascham, sixteenth-century schoolmaster and philosopher, wisely insisted that training in expression should begin in childhood. He would have children speak, he declared, "so, as it may well appear, that the brain doth govern the tongue and that reason leadeth forth the talk." The theory that as a preparation for good speaking and writing, "good understanding must first be bred in the child," is assuredly the only right one. Should the college student, however, find perchance that he has not yet learned to use his mind aright, if he is really in earnest, there is still hope. Good thinking, to offer a brief suggestion, consists first of all in concentration: which means to center upon one idea and to follow it out to a conclusion. Young writers often reveal to the practiced instructor that they are accustomed to lead a sort of butterfly mental existence, lingering in any one spot only long enough barely to touch the rose petal of thought, never stopping to search out the deeper resting places of fact, logic, and reason. The result is superficial writing. A student of this type, asked to write a thousand-word theme, invariably chooses some such subject as *Education,* or *Modern Inventions,* or *War,* and then spatters his pages full of vague nothings. The thoughtful student, on the other hand, limits himself to such a topic as *My Idea of the Honor System, My Most Interesting Teacher, The Telephone Transmitter, An Incident at Soissons,* or *A Day at Camp Custer,* and tries to develop definitely and as fully as he can a line of homogeneous thought.

Good thinking means, usually, to concentrate upon smaller units of subject matter, and to study these units

in their many-sided connections with each other and with larger units. This requires that we see things in terms of cause and effect; that we shall compare and contrast, analyze and synthesize, shall learn to perceive the relation of parts to the whole, and of the whole to the parts. And, of course, good thinking means that we shall refuse the inviting paths that lead to pleasant and easy side-excursions and shall follow with bulldog tenacity the main idea wherever logic may lead.

III

Reading

It sounds trite, but read the Bible, Shakespeare, and W. H. Hudson, the nature writer. Learn French well and read Prosper Mérimée and Maupassant. . . . Their economy of words and clearness is wonderful. Read Anatole France. . . . Read the Russian Turgenev . . . , not for his style, because it suffers in translation, but for the way he sees human life and constructs his stories. Read Walter Pater and Stevenson, but beware of their tendency to preciosity. Read Dickens and Samuel Butler. . . . Of modern poets read Masefield and Sassoon.—John Galsworthy.

. . . The first thing is, I am sure, to read good and solid books—authors with a real style of their own, such as Ruskin, Pater, Stevenson, Charles Lamb, Wells. Don't read ordinary magazines or poor novels.—A. C. Benson.

Read the best English—the classical best English—and nothing but the best.—Lennox Robinson.

In any occupation or art we learn by watching and studying others. In writing, this is doubly true, for in our study of the fine things of the masters we not only observe how others have achieved right results, but we gradually develop a sharpened sense for what is excellent, and so, setting our mark of attainment ever higher and higher, we find ourselves growing increasingly self-critical and discontented with our own shortcomings. As craftsmen studying the work of master craftsmen we see more and more what is to be done, and moreover, consciously or unconsciously, acquire new understandings of "the tricks of the trade." Thus we naturally and progressively learn

the business of writing. It is not strange that great writers advise much reading for beginners.

The list of great literary men who have advocated the method of learning to write through reading is a long one. It includes such distinguished names as Longinus, Quintilian, and Ben Jonson, and such lesser ones as Du Bellay, Edward Young, and Lafcadio Hearn. Of later writers, Robert Louis Stevenson has been its most notable exponent. Stevenson's own account of his early method in combining reading and writing has been widely quoted, but perhaps it is always worth repeating:

Whenever I read a book or a passage that particularly pleased me, in which a thing was said or an effect rendered with propriety, in which there was either some conspicuous force or some happy distinction of style, I must set myself to ape that quality. I was unsuccessful, and I knew it; and tried again and was again unsuccessful, and always unsuccessful; but at least in these vain bouts, I got some practice in rhythm, in harmony, in construction, and the coördination of parts. I have thus played the sedulous ape to Hazlitt, Lamb, to Baudelaire and to Obermann. . . . That, like it or not, is the way to learn to write: whether I have profited or not, that is the way. It was so Keats learned, and there was never a finer temperament for literature than Keats's; it was so, if we could trace it out, that all men have learned; and that is why a revival of letters is always accompanied or heralded by a cast back to earlier and fresher models. Perhaps I hear some one cry out: But this is not the way to be original! It is not; nor is there any way but to be born so. Nor yet if you are born original, is there anything in this training that shall clip the wings of your originality. . . . Before he can tell what cadences he truly prefers, the student should have tried all that are possible; before he can choose and preserve a fitting key of words, he should long have practiced the literary scales; and it is only after years of such gymnastics that he can sit down at last, legions of words swarming to his call, dozens of turns of phrases simultaneously bidding for his choice, and he himself knowing what he wants to do and (within the narrow limits of a man's ability) able to do it.

—*A College Magazine.*

It should be noted that with Stevenson emphasis was placed, not on wide, so much as on extremely careful and discriminative, reading in the study of models whose fine effects he wished to reproduce.

Ford and Conrad read widely and purposefully. In his book on Conrad, Ford tells us their method and aim:

> Tremendous readers, both of us, we tried to gather from the books we had read what made one book readable and the other not. English gentlemen of the Palmerston days, there was no nonsense about us; we tried to turn out the sort of book that, from *Lady Audley's Secret* to Boswell's *Johnson*, and from *Midshipman Easy* to *Education Sentimentale*, the English gentleman might read in his library, with the cedar trees on the lawn outside it—or the flag lieutenant, in harbor, during the dogwatches.
>
> We had the intimate conviction that two and only two classes of books are of universal appeal: the very best and the very worst. The very worst, securing immediate attention by way of some trick, gradually fade from the public memories; the very best, being solid and shipshape productions of solid and shipshape men with no nonsense about them, remain. We attempted then to turn out solid and shipshape books.
>
> —Ford, *Joseph Conrad.*

From constant familiarity and association with the nobility of intellect and taste represented in great literature, the mind will gradually take on itself the forms of nobility. Conversely, it is unsafe to spend time with literature of inferior rank. For just as through association, either with those of mean and low or with those of dignified and lofty nature, as the case may be, the manners of men almost imperceptibly grow to reflect those of their companions, so will the style and thoughts of writers become ennobled or debased by their literary familiars.

One thing must be clearly understood. The masters are not to be studied in order to be servilely imitated. Any actual imitation of style, such as Stevenson practiced, should be indulged in purely as a finger exercise in prepa-

ration for something more original. Du Bellay's [1] motto, which, unfortunately, he practiced less effectively than preached, was a fairly good one: he held that modern writers should study the classics, not in order to imitate them, but to derive "blood and nourishment" from them. Edward Young's theory was even better; Young hated plagiarism and imitation in any form, and in his essay *On Original Composition* he made a plea for originality among English authors. "Hope we, from plagiarism, any dominion in literature?" he heatedly inquires. No, indeed. Rather, "It is by a sort of noble contagion, from a general familiarity with their writings, and not by any particular sordid theft, that we can be the better for those who went before us." It is through an intelligent emulation of the lives—not the works—of great predecessors that English writers may profit, Young teaches.

"Must we then, you say, not imitate ancient authors?" he says. "Imitate them by all means; but imitate aright. He that imitates the divine *Iliad* does not imitate Homer; but he who takes the same method which Homer took, for arriving at a capacity of accomplishing a work so great. Tread in his steps to the sole fountain of immortality; . . . but imitate not the composition but the man."

In his delightful "As I Like It" in *Scribner's Magazine,* William Lyon Phelps once threw out a bit of counsel to young writers that seems almost an echo of Young:

> My advice to young authors: Don't imitate H. L. Mencken. Remember, even his broadest humor, his most violent denunciations, and his most diverting meditations on life invariably are founded on some actual *knowledge*. Better imitate his learning before you imitate his manner. Otherwise, David in Saul's armor will more closely resemble "what the man will wear" than you will resemble H. L. M. I am sure that Mencken's antagonists do not cause him so much embarrassment as his disciples.

[1] Du Bellay was a French critic of the Pléiade School, who had much to do with establishing the trend of modern French language.

Mr. Mencken, whatever his faults, is a man of prodigious scholarship; those who know him declare that he seems to have read everything and to have forgotten nothing. Professor Phelps is gently reminding young would-be imitators that if they too are to be critics and writers of influence, whether after the manner of Mr. Mencken or anyone else, the way lies through the kind of study and application to which Mr. Mencken has subjected himself, not through a febrile echo of his style and sentiments. If after such application they come to independent conclusions and develop an individual style, then whatever they have to say will be of intrinsic value and will not need to depend on borrowed luster from any other writer.

When we begin to study the lives of great writers intimately it becomes at once apparent that most of them must have been what we call "great readers." There is Shakespeare, for example, who has often been spoken of as if only indifferently educated.[1] And yet what a voracious reader Shakespeare must have been. He borrowed most if not all of his plots; in order to do that he must naturally have read and studied the originals, and in the process of selection what hundreds he must have rejected one can never know. But there is every evidence that Shakespeare read everything he could get his hands on; and he not only read, but he digested and assimilated, in a way that the average educated man of today knows nothing about. His range of reading was great: he was versed in the psychology of his day, he was learned in sea lore; he has astonished critics with his knowledge of medicine; he knew so much about the legal profession that scholars have written to prove he must have studied law. In history he read Halle's and Holinshed's *Chronicles,* and Plutarch's *Lives;* in fiction he knew intimately such writers

[1] Though in a new *Life of William Shakespeare,* Professor J. Q. Adams revives the entertaining theory that before going to London Shakespeare was for some time a school teacher at Stratford.

as Cinthio and Boccaccio, Lodge and Greene. He was acquainted with the poetry of Chaucer. He read all the old and all the new plays, as constant marks of their influence upon him show. The evidence for the great dramatist's familiarity with all sorts of current literature is so great throughout his work, that one quite sees justice in Greene's complaint of him as "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers," the *our* possessive for the popular writers of the day. For Shakespeare did not hesitate to borrow for his own use the plots of both plays and novels of his contemporaries. The cases of Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Greene's *Pandosto,* the originals of his *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale,* are conspicuous examples. It must be admitted, too, that Shakespeare at different times even shamelessly carried his pilfering habits to the point of borrowing the method and style of some of his ablest rivals; but he did not do his best work this way; he was greatest when he was most himself; his glory is that his own individuality was distinct, he knew life and understood human beings and their passions, their joys and sorrows; he had a tremendous personality and power enough to make over and give a new interpretation to the literary materials that came his way.

What was true of Shakespeare has been true to a large extent of most of our notable writers. Dryden and Milton may be cited as men of wide learning, each of them having retired from the world for several years after a university course, presumably for reflection and deep and prolonged study. The essayists Bacon and Macaulay, the novelists George Eliot and Bulwer Lytton, and the dramatists Ben Jonson and Chapman come to mind in further exemplification of this fact. Every one knows how Browning gorged all sorts of curious literature, and how constantly this shows itself in his poetry. Samuel Johnson used *to read like a Turk,* he told Boswell. Even Keats, rarely thought of as a scholar, read with almost unparalleled avid-

ity. As early as his fifteenth year, he became so absorbed in works of history, mythology, and poetry that he read even during recess periods at school and brought his book to table at meal time; later, when he became acquainted with Leigh Hunt, he almost lived in Hunt's library, slept there indeed, that he might be with his beloved books both evening and morning. Many a *good* writer has failed to become a *great* writer because he lacked the reading and training to deepen his mental grasp and insight. In such cases the learning that critics like Ben Jonson, Addison, and Pope demanded of literary men would have been salvation. It is interesting in this connection to read what J. A. Symonds once said of Stevenson:

> Stevenson has told me the whole history of his wife today. It is very curious and creditable to himself and her. I have apprehensions about his power of intellectual last. The more I see of him, the less I find of solid mental stuff. He wants years of study in tough subjects. After all, a University education has some merits. One feels the want of it in men like him.
>
> —*Letters and Papers.*

Everyone is not of course going to be a professional writer, and everyone is not a genius like Shakespeare, Milton, or Keats; but there is no one who cannot profit by reading good books in the right way. Lincoln is reported to have said in explanation of his ambition to read, "I like to add a bit of some one else's brain to my own every day." That is a motive worth adopting by any one, but especially by one who is learning to write. The effect of Lincoln's careful study of great writers showed itself, in part, in the unusual force and grace and purity of his own prose style. There is no surer basis for such a style than a taste engendered through contact with good books. Even a few minutes a day devoted to observant, critical reading —not skimming—is an almost indispensable auxiliary in any possible course of training in composition; it will mean

not only a daily mental growth, but a corresponding development in critical taste and the power to use words for expressing thought in a manner commensurate with that taste.

EXERCISES

1. (a) Make a list of five things that you feel you *know* the most about, in the sense that you have passed beyond a mere verbal or casual acquaintance to a real understanding of them.

(b) Write a brief paper in which you explain how you arrived at this understanding of one of these things. (That is, was it through personal experience, study, concentration and reflection, or a combination of different factors?) Make your explanation accurate, clear, interesting.

2. Have you ever heard a great deal about a place or a thing without much real understanding, until upon personal contact you came suddenly to a new realization of what it was like? Relate your experience.

3. Make a list of the things you at one time believed you knew all about, but have since learned you understood less well than you imagined. Write an account of one such experience.

4. Read a chapter from one of your textbooks in your usual way, without special concentration. Write at once, and without reflection, a summary of what you have read. Now reread the chapter more carefully. Give it your undivided attention. Close the book; think over what you have read; jot down an outline of it. Now write a new summary. Compare it with the first, from the point of view of accuracy, clarity, completeness, interest.

5. Think of a poem you have read but do not understand. Go back to it; reread it; study it line by line, word by word. Think about it; read it again; think again. When you feel sure you know what it is about, write a brief statement of what the poet is saying.

6. Experiment with Stevenson's method of learning to write.

(a) Read an essay from Bacon, Addison, De Quincey, Lamb, Macaulay, Stevenson, or Chesterton, and write an article in the same style.

(b) Read a story from Hawthorne, Poe, Hudson, Stephen

Crane, de Maupassant, or Bret Harte and write a narrative in the same manner.

(c) Read an essay or story from some well-known living author, and write an experimental theme in as nearly the same style as you can.

7. How much reading have you done? How have you done this reading—in a slap-dash, haphazard fashion, or in a thoughtful, systematic way?

Have you ever consistently tried any one of the following devices:

(a) A "reading" book, in which you set down a summary of the contents of every new book read, with remarks as to your opinion of the work?

(b) A "journal" in which you keep a record of the things you read, with notes, outlines, quotations, or abstracts?

(c) A card index, with summaries, notes, criticism, etc., on an individual card for each book?

8. In a paper describing his early methods in reading, a college student wrote, in part:

> I have observed, that this kind of education usually continues until the boy comes to college. Occasionally, a boy reared in a family in which intellectual ideals are held, and more than usual frankness prevails between parents and children, may be awakened at an early age to the speculative aspect of human knowledge. Personally, I think that I had made a start along these lines, by my sixteenth year.
>
> I had read Tolstoy's *Confessions,* and instead of being swept along by the force of his argument to a personal realization of the strong faith of his later life, I had been left weltering in a sea of doubt. It so happened in my own case, that this doubt, which was a very real and constantly present feeling, was one of the strongest reactions that I have ever had in my life. It set me to wondering: I had to know the truth. I had heard somewhere the phrase, "an insatiable passion for knowledge"—the scholar achieved his greatness because he was driven by "an insatiable passion for knowledge." This idea became a part

of my thoughts, and for several years I read everything I could lay my hands on that I recognized as a sincere searching for the truth. I read with pure excitement and deep interest.

My only difficulty was that I could not read fast enough —there was so much to read that I seemed to be getting nowhere. I had been constantly in the habit of running to the dictionary for definitions of words and concise explanations of philosophical ideas, and finding it very clear and condensed. But at this point I turned to the *Encyclopedia Britannica,* which from early childhood had always been more or less at my elbow, and beginning with the article on philosophy, continued my reading with the articles on each phase of the subject, spending hours following out cross-references.

Then I found a small classified index of the entire *Encyclopedia* hidden away in the back of the volume devoted to the general alphabetical index. This contained lists of all the articles in the field of philosophy, along with the names of all the great men in this field, whose biographies were sketched. With this guide to help me, I read extensively, and gained a familiarity with most of the philosophical systems and a general knowledge of many of the philosophers, though in most cases I must confess I did not gain a complete understanding of them.

Sooner or later during my reading, I set an evening aside in which I endeavored to write an abstract of the most important and more particularly the new ideas which I had come across in my study. After an hour or so, I laid aside my pen and continued the analysis in my mind. Then and there I believe that I was enjoying one of the fruits of true scholarship. My mind, in confident possession of the ideas which I had been reading for weeks, compared and analyzed them with a clearness, eagerness, and lucidity which I have never known since. It was one of those rare moments, when, owing to an excess of physical energy and unusual mental stimulus, the mind achieves a spontaneity and a rapidity which, while long remembered as a vivid experience, can seldom, if ever, be superin-

> duced. I have sometimes thought that lawyers working under constant mental strain in the preparation of a case, have found that, in an important battle of wits in the courtroom, their minds responded in the same way.

Have you ever tried to organize your reading toward some definite end such as this young man pursued, or to set down and analyze in this way the results of your reading? Try it. Begin with, say, Mary Stuart, or Napoleon, Shelley, or Edgar Allan Poe, or with Religion, Drama, Psychology, or Music. Having made your selection, read everything you can find on your subject—biography, history, essays, plays, poems, novels. Keep a record of your reading; write out your own ideas as they come. To read into one subject a year in this way will soon make you an eminently educated man; it will, moreover, give you much new material for writing, if your interest happens to lie in this direction.

PART TWO

The Units of Composition

Chapter V

THE PARAGRAPH

I

EVERYONE is familiar with the incoherent youngster who, bursting with big news, rushes in to tell his story. In his excitement and hurry he tries to tell it all at once, and the result, of course, is chaos. When the lad has floundered for a time in the confusion of his jumbled ideas, the parent may interrupt and, if he is wise, say something like this, "Now suppose you calm down a little and make a new start; begin at the beginning, and tell this just as it happened." With a little reflection the child may then go back over his story and relate it in an orderly, intelligible way. In response to the demands of effective communication he has brought some order out of the original tangle of his ideas, has so arranged and classified those ideas that he is able to make himself understood. If he had written his story out, there would have been even greater need for this arrangement and classification.

It is one of the peculiarities of writing, as the great critic Lessing emphasized long ago, that it is an art of progression. This is true whether one is speaking from the standpoint of the writer or of the reader. In written discourse neither instant and complete communication nor instant and complete comprehension is possible. The meaning of the writer must be unfolded step by step. A painting or a piece of sculpture may be taken in at a

glance, but the eye of the most practiced reader is unable to focus upon more than a few words of writing at a time, and even so the mind is often put to it to follow and grasp and interpret the visual symbols as they are flashed into the brain. In reading, the mind receives ideas in blocks or sections, and, moreover, requires that these units shall have such a logical relationship to each other that orderly progress may be made toward a full understanding. The art of communication through writing then becomes the art of unfolding meanings in units and in sequence.

Obviously, then, the first step for the writer becomes such concentration upon, and such a mastery of, his materials, that his ideas fall into their naturally related units. Now it is a curious fact that, in spite of the extreme importance of the sentence unit in writing, we *think* in units of the paragraph; and the reader, likewise, finds it necessary to grasp meanings by paragraphs rather than by sentences. A little experimentation either in writing or reading will so readily prove the truth of this statement that it needs no demonstration here. It is this function of the paragraph as the natural unit in related, arranged thinking that makes it of such supreme importance in the art of written communication. An intelligently paragraphed composition is an indication that just as a military leader marshals an otherwise unsorted mob into platoons and companies and regiments, the writer has subjected his stubborn materials to the close discipline of classification and orderly arrangement. It is only when thought is thus controlled that it can be expressed either to the satisfaction of the writer or to the enlightenment and pleasure of the reader. Ideas, like soldiers, are ineffective unless they can be managed. The nature of the paragraph in the general unfolding of meaning in sequence now becomes clear: It is a unit of arranged thought.

As such, the paragraph is not an unfolded sentence, as it has sometimes been called; and it is not, strictly speak-

ing, a short composition;[1] it is rather a division or a subdivision of a composition in which a unit of thought, having a direct relationship to like units that precede or follow it, takes its place in the progressive march of the whole thought of the writer toward complete and triumphant expression. Thus the paragraph has a function no less for the reader than for the writer: for the one it is a guide and a convenience; for the other it is an indispensable instrument of intelligible expression.

Paragraph divisions were not always indicated. In fact, examples of ancient writing show that, originally, not even words and sentences were separated from each other. The inscriptions on the famous Rosetta Stone, for instance, written in two languages—in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics and in Greek script—occur in solid lines with no intervals to set off either words, sentences, or paragraphs. It is probable that even so the writers thought in paragraphs, roughly, at least, but had not yet learned the mechanical trick of dividing them from each other. One of the interesting phenomena of historical development in the use of language is the slowness with which some of the most useful and seemingly obvious literary devices were adopted. Even Shakespeare did not divide his plays into acts. And as for paragraphing itself, the English were notoriously inconsistent in their use of the paragraph up to the last of the seventeenth century. The primitive method of writing in solid lines inevitably made reading a difficult matter: a long succession of unbroken symbols would confuse and deaden the sense. But the Greeks in time learned the value of separating words and sentences from each other; likewise, they learned the need

[1] Short themes with no divisions or with divisions too brief to need indication are often spoken of as paragraphs, though, in fact, the paragraph can exist only in groups. However, the writer composes only one paragraph at a time, and to all intents and purposes when a student has learned to write a short theme of one "paragraph," he has learned most of what is to be known about writing longer compositions.

for and the logic of setting off the larger units containing natural divisions of thought. Their method was to draw a short horizontal line in the manuscript where such a division occurred, and to place a mark in the margin opposite, to indicate the location of the break. The Greeks used the word Παραγραφος, derived from Παρα (beside) and γραφειν (to write), to describe this new custom, and from it we have our word *paragraph,* the symbol for which is a modification of that used by the Greeks, a sort of reversed P, the well-known¶. The habit of using this symbol has, however, been superseded in ordinary practice by the more conveniently recognizable indention, the sign being of chief service nowadays in revision and proofreading.

II

Types of Paragraphs

Paragraphs are of many types. They have often been classified from the points of view both of function and of methods of development, and the list therefrom may easily become a very long one indeed. There are, moreover, certain specialized paragraph forms, such as items in an affidavit or contract or other legal document, heads in a military order, sections of an advertisement, terms in a bill of sale, and so forth. There are also such special types as the introductory, transitional, and summarizing paragraph; likewise, such forms as that used in marking off separate speeches in dialogue, and the highly individualized journalistic paragraph to be found in the news stories in our daily papers. Of these special kinds, the introductory, transitional, and summarizing paragraph will be considered in the succeeding chapter on the composition as a whole, and the paragraph of dialogue will be taken up in the section on narrative. The narrative paragraph itself can hardly be said to have any set form.

It is exceedingly variable both in structure and length. Perhaps the most definite thing that can be safely said on the subject is that in narrative each paragraph performs the office of advancing the story at least one step—however short it may be—forward. Of the news story paragraph, it should be noted here that it differs from the regular paragraph in that the peculiar demands of journalism have resulted in the creation of a technique in paragraph-building to answer those demands. The first paragraph is a summary; it contains the substance of the whole story. The following paragraphs retell the story in detail; they are arranged like blocks put together to build a structure primarily designed to catch the eye and rivet the attention. They are brisk and pointed and conspicuous. They are short, so that he who runs may read. When well managed, they serve their purpose admirably, but like the forms used in legal documents, bills of sale, and so forth, they are employed by specialists and exist apart from the paragraph of ordinary writing, which is our main concern in this chapter.

As for the classification of paragraphs according to general function and method, it should be pointed out that a writer is rarely conscious of an intention to compose any particular type of paragraph whatever. He writes the kind of paragraph that his subject matter requires. The important thing is that he shall have so organized his material in his mind that he can set it down in units of arranged thought.

III

Paragraph Development

These organized units of thought are developed in a variety of ways. The skilled writer is a master of paragraphs, and naturally uses the type that most nearly fits

his needs. The young writer can do nothing to greater advantage than to familiarize himself with the methods of experienced authors in building paragraph structures for their thought. Let it be remembered that fine essays and fine novels are but a series of fine paragraphs; he who learns to write one paragraph well may write a second, and a third, and so on to the end. It is infinitely worth while to master the paragraph. We learn to write good ones, first of all, by studying to find how others have succeeded; then by doing our best to measure up to, and possibly to surpass, them.

The Topic Statement.—Ordinarily, the main thought of a well-built expository or descriptive paragraph is such as may be summarized in a single sentence. This sentence does not always appear in the paragraph as it is written; where there seems no need of a formal statement of the central idea, it is often merely implied. Where this sentence occurs in the paragraph itself it is called the *topic statement* or *topic sentence.* Thus, in the first of the following paragraphs from Francis Lockwood's "How to Study" the topic is clearly stated in the sentence, "The object of study is, in the first place, to get fast and firm possession of facts. . . ." In the second it is, "You study for discipline"; and the main thought of the third is in the statement, " . . . there is nothing in the world so glorious as truth, nothing so fascinating as the pursuit of wisdom."

What are the real aims of study? The object of study is, in the first place, to get fast and firm possession of facts—facts of spelling, reading, mathematics, composition, history, language, geography, and the like. It is highly desirable that we should know how to spell *Chicago* and *business; Boston* and *brains;* and that we should know for all time. We want to know once for all that seven times nine are sixty-three; that Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation; that an island is a body of land completely surrounded by water; and that a proper name should begin with

a capital letter. Many, many minute facts, as well as certain connected bodies of truth, should be embedded in one's memory as deeply and securely as a bullet that has lodged in the heart of a growing tree. And one should master certain processes of thought, and grip a few great underlying and unchanging principles of life and conduct.

Yet the chief value of study does not lie in the stowing away of facts and principles. You study for *discipline*. You study in order that you may become a student, just as you exercise, not for recreation alone, but that you may become an athlete. In making yourself a student you are making yourself fit for the fierce intellectual encounters of middle life. No time for training then! And woe to him whose brain-fiber is flabby then, whose mental processes are slow and hazy and uncertain! Your mind must work with the force and steadiness of a piston-rod; must clutch like a vise. You will be pitted against antagonists worthy of your mettle. They will not sleep; nor will they let you sleep during the long day of strain in the court-room, on the stump, in the halls of legislation, at the editorial desk, in the counting-house, where the tides of traffic run full and hot, and where masters of finance and captains of industry sit secretly, silently, astutely making or marring your fortunes or the fortunes of weak men and women whose champion you are. It may be that with knife or drug you will suddenly be set in the lonely night to hold Death at bay in some terrified home, or on some tragic highway or byway. You are winning these crucial contests now by the precision and the promptness and the thoroughness that you are working into your higher nerve centers; by the severe training that you are giving yourself in attention, decision, mental alertness, and moral control.

Again, it is worth while to study because there is nothing in the world so glorious as truth, nothing so fascinating as the pursuit of wisdom. Mind alone can unlock the meaning of the world. If we would be free we must think ourselves free. To the degree that we are ignorant we are slaves—slaves to wind and wave, to time and tide, to sin and pain, to man and devil and microbe. But to the extent that we study and think and gain wisdom, we drive back the barriers of darkness and come into the full freedom of our own free spirits. There is in us a divine curiosity that urges us to perpetual inquiry. We are set in this world to solve riddles.

We study because there burns within us an unquenched and unquenchable passion to uncover reality; to drive out the bogies and the fetishes and the hoodoos that lurk in this human wilderness through which we are traveling. Study purifies and exalts the student. It loosens the bonds of Time and Space. Study enthrones a man with the gods. Through study we may escape into the infinite and the eternal; we may unite ourselves with God.

—*The Freshman and His College.*

In the two paragraphs from Hawthorne that follow, the central impression of the first is largely contained in "His face . . . has a frost-bitten aspect"; that of the second in ". . . you discover that there is a continual unrest within him."

He is a small man, with gray hair and gray stubble beard, and is invariably clad in a shabby surtout of snuff color, closely buttoned, and half concealing a pair of gray pantaloons; the whole dress, though clean and entire, being evidently flimsy with much wear. His face, thin, withered, furrowed, and with features which even age has failed to render impressive, has a frost-bitten aspect. It is a moral frost which no physical warmth or comfortableness could counteract. The summer sunshine may fling its white heat upon him, or the good fire of the depot room may make him the focus of its blaze on a winter's day; but all in vain; for still the old man looks as if he were in a frosty atmosphere, with scarcely warmth enough to keep life in the region about his heart. It is a patient, long-suffering, quiet, hopeless, shivering aspect. He is not desperate, —that, though its etymology implies no more, would be too positive an expression,—but merely devoid of hope. As all his past life, probably, offers no spots of brightness to his memory, so he takes his present poverty and discomfort as entirely a matter of course: he thinks it the definition of existence, so far as himself is concerned, to be poor, cold and uncomfortable. It may be added, that time has not thrown dignity as a mantle over the old man's figure: there is nothing venerable about him: you pity him without a scruple.

. . . . .

A slight observer would speak of the old man's quietude; but, on closer scrutiny, you discover that there is a continual unrest within him, which somewhat resembles the fluttering action of the nerves

in a corpse from which life has recently departed. Though he never exhibits any violent action, and, indeed, might appear to be sitting quite still, yet you perceive, when his minuter peculiarities begin to be detected, that he is always making some little movement or other. He looks anxiously at his plate of cakes or pyramid of apples and slightly alters their arrangement, with an evident idea that a great deal depends on their being disposed exactly thus and so. Then for a moment he gazes out of the window; then he shivers quietly and folds his arms across his breast, as if to draw himself closer within himself, and thus keep a flicker of warmth in his lonesome heart. Now he turns again to his merchandize of cakes, apples, and candy, and discovers that this cake or that apple, or yonder stick of red and white candy, has somehow got out of its proper position. And is there not a walnut kernel too many or too few in one of those small tin measures? Again, the whole arrangement appears to be settled to his mind; but, in the course of a minute or two, there will assuredly be something to set right. At times, by an indescribable shadow upon his features, too quiet, however, to be noticed until you are familiar with his ordinary aspect, the expression of frost-bitten, patient despondency becomes very touching. It seems as if just at that instant the suspicion occurred to him that, in his chill decline of life, earning scanty bread by selling cakes, apples, and candy, he is a very miserable old fellow.

—*Mosses from an Old Manse.*

Topic sentences in a paragraph may be in themselves interesting and valuable, but they are usually so condensed and bare in meaning that stated alone they merely arouse an attitude of expectancy and interrogation. The reader's mental attitude might be expressed in such terms as "Yes! Well, what of it?" "This sounds all right, but I don't quite understand; please be more explicit." The object of the writer must be to flash over to his reader the full import of his idea. The bald, naked statement will ordinarily not be enough. The idea is new to the reader, he must see more of it before he can either comprehend or accept it; the idea is abstract and abstruse, it needs explicit and concrete explanation; or it seems shadowy and

tenuous and demands enlargement and illumination. The writer must hold his idea before the reader's attention, must amplify it and elaborate upon it, must define it perhaps, repeating the central thought in other and more familiar terms, must compare it with something in the reader's experience, or illustrate and exemplify, until by focusing the attention of the reader upon his central idea long enough, through adding new materials and enlarging upon the original statement, full implication of the meaning intended dawns upon the mind. To know how to accomplish this end is all that needs to be known about paragraph writing.

As a rule, that paragraph will best accomplish its purpose which is, in one form or another, most definite and concrete. Herein lies half the secret of success in writing. He who refuses thus to be specific, who continually insists upon generalities and abstractions, will only mystify, and weary, and irritate his readers. Let the student, however, once get into his mind the essential fact that his task in composing a paragraph is the progressive unfolding of a central idea, which is to become clearer with each new sentence until at the end the full meaning or impression stands fully revealed, and he will have taken a first long step toward competent and interesting writing.

General Explication.—There is a paragraph in which the more definite ideas branch out from the main thought like limbs from a tree, each in clear outline, yet each a distinct part of the whole, indispensable, in fact, to the symmetry and unity of the whole. This is known as the paragraph of *general explication*. An excellent example occurs in this paragraph from Thoreau. Note the effects of the direct and explicit statements in the evolution of the central idea.

What recommends commerce to me is its enterprise and bravery. It does not clasp its hands and pray to Jupiter. It sees these men

every day go about their business with more or less courage and content, doing more even than they suspect, and perchance better employed than they could have consciously devised. I am less affected by their heroism who stood up for half an hour in the front line at Buena Vista, than by the steady and cheerful valor of the men who inhabit the snow-plough for their winter quarters; who have not merely the three o'clock in the morning courage, which Bonaparte thought was the rarest, but whose courage does not go to rest so early, who go to sleep only when the storm sleeps or the sinews of their iron steed are frozen. On this morning of the Great Snow, perchance, which is still raging and chilling men's blood, I hear the muffled tone of their engine bell from out the fog bank of their chilled breath, which announces that the cars *are coming*, without long delay, notwithstanding the veto of a New England northeast snow storm, and I behold the ploughmen covered with snow and rime, their heads peering above the mould-board which is turning down other than daisies and the nests of field-mice, like boulders of the Sierra Nevada, that occupy an outside place in the universe.

—*Walden.*

"What recommends commerce to me is its enterprise and bravery." Here is one of those topic sentences that cause us to lift our eyebrows interrogatively and wait for further development. It comes. Every new sentence amplifies and clarifies the idea contained in the opening statement. Commerce is enterprising; it wastes no time in idle petitions; it is a doer, cheerfully and resolutely going about its daily business. Commerce is brave with a bravery more thrilling, because it is more enduring and steadfast, than that of armies in battle. Deadly frost and blinding blizzard may do their worst, but the devotees of commerce clear the track; the trains must run, they "*are coming.*" Admirable, incomparable courage and enterprise of commerce! That in a nutshell is what Thoreau, through the method of explication, flashes over to our minds in this paragraph, the opening sentence of which, standing alone, leaves us politely inquiring.

In the same way observe in the following how, with each added specific interrogation or direct statement, the exact content of the phrases "Many separate questions" and "our present question" become clear to us.

Many separate controversies, in all of which other questions arise, are in part dependent upon our present question. Should boys learn mainly classics or mainly science? Among other considerations, one is that the classics are ornamental and science useful. Should education as soon as possible become technical instruction for some trade or profession? Again the controversy between the useful and the ornamental is relevant, though not decisive. Should children be taught to enunciate correctly and to have pleasant manners, or are these mere relics of aristocracy? Is appreciation of art a thing of any value except in the artist? Should spelling be phonetic? All these and many other controversies are argued in part in terms of the controversy between the useful and the ornamental.

—Bertrand Russell, *Education and the Good Life.*

In the following extract from Hawthorne, the meaning of the topic statement rapidly emerges with the growth of the first paragraph, as the author shows explicitly the sources for the drear austerity of which he talks. The first sentence of the next paragraph reinforces the whole impression; at the same time it is directing attention to a new turn of thought.

By and by, in a little time, the outward world puts on a drear austerity. On some October morning there is a heavy hoar-frost on the grass and along the tops of the fences; and at sunrise the leaves fall from the trees of our avenue without a breath of wind, quietly descending by their own weight. All summer long they have murmured like the noise of waters; they have roared loudly while the branches were wrestling with the thunder gust; they have made music both glad and solemn; they have attuned my thoughts by their quiet sound as I paced to and fro beneath the arch of intermingling boughs. Now they can only rustle under my feet. Henceforth the gray parsonage begins to assume a larger importance, and draws to its fireside—for the abomination of the air-

tight stove is reserved till wintry weather,—draws closer and closer to its fireside the vagrant impulses that had gone wandering about through the summer.

When summer was dead and buried the Old Manse became as lonely as a hermitage.

—*Mosses from an Old Manse.*

Definition.—The paragraph of definition occurs when an idea is too tenuous or too many-sided to be successfully disposed of in a sentence. For the definition of terms wide in scope and difficult to understand even a paragraph is frequently insufficient and an essay of many paragraphs is required. The usual problem in definition is to present the idea to be defined in different terms, particularly in terms more familiar to the reader; occasionally mere repetition in a variety of ways will turn the trick. A paragraph of definition often occurs where as a result of loose and careless usage or vague thinking, or general misapprehension, a subject of thought has come to be regarded in such a broad or indefinite sense that it needs to be put within compassable bounds. Such is Elizabeth Drew's definition of literature.

It may, I think, be of some help, if, before arguing further about literary appreciation, we go back another step, to the root of the matter, and ask the basic question what literature *is*. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has defined it, "what sundry men and women have said memorably concerning life," which is, perhaps, as good a working definition as it is possible to find. As modern scholarship enables us to see further and further into past civilizations and "the dark backward and abyss of time," the more apparent does it become that human nature remains unchanged. Egyptian, Greek, Chinese, Hindu, medieval, Renaissance, or modern European thinkers and creators, tell the same stories, and distill the same comments from them as to the nature of life and of mankind. Men and women all down the ages have faced the same eternal human problems and have asked the same eternal human questions as they found themselves confronted by the same harsh interplay of human venture and event, the same clash of opposites which forever thwart and jar

each other in human existence: aspiration and achievement, physical and spiritual, actual and ideal, good and evil, life and death. Meanwhile, all those who have had what we vaguely call the gift of expression, have always striven to describe in words something of what they have seen, something of what they have heard, something of what they have thought, something of what they have felt, in this eternal and unchanging drama, the author of the Book of Job crying with the same voice as Œdipus or Milton's Samson, "God of our Fathers, what is Man?" No writer can ever solve the riddle: the characters he creates are but comments suggested by his own mind, the stories he tells are but illustrations evolved by his own mind, and these comments and illustrations vary with every age and nationality and individual. But the aim of each in turn is always and eternally the same; to give some created vision of what life is, it may be to fall into the baffling fascination of attempting to explain its why; and the unfading interest for the reader is to compare epochs and peoples and personalities as they practice this single aim: to watch each one, from Confucius to Conrad, from Sophocles to Shaw, as he illustrates and interprets human existence in the terms of his own times and his own temperament. We are all, as Galsworthy says, little bits of continuity, and "the still sad music of humanity" remains the same melody, whether we listen to it as the Song of Solomon or in the latest jazz tempo, interpreted through shawm or lyre, spinet or saxophone.

—*The Modern Novel.*

What is *life?* In his usual illuminating fashion, Gilbert Murray tries to answer this age-old question for us:

The word "life," oddly enough, means "body." I think that comes from another line of thought, in which mankind, when trying to express the thing we call soul or life, started not from the dead body but from a dream-image or phantom. A dream-image, a shape seen in hallucination, a reflection in water or a looking-glass: what is wrong with them, and how are they lacking in the life of the living? Why, they are like those ghosts in Homer. There is "a breath and an image," but no heart or blood or solidity. They are not real. If they could drink of blood and grow solid, if they could get themselves a body, that would be life.[1]

[1] "The Soul As It Is," from *Tradition and Progress,* p. 143.

Illustration.—One of the most interesting types of expository paragraph to write, and one of the most surely successful in making meanings clear, is the paragraph of illustration. The illustration may be general, or it may be in the form of a specific example. "When in doubt, give an example," a sagacious teacher of composition used to tell her pupils. And that was excellent advice indeed. The person who can illustrate his meaning knows that he knows, and he can be sure, moreover, that he will make the other person know too. The following paragraphs are developed through illustration. In the first there is specific example; the second is both general and specific.

Tennyson, while affecting to dread observation, was none the less no little vain, a weakness of which Meredith gave me this amusing illustration. Tennyson and William Morris were once walking together on a road in the Isle of Wight. Suddenly in the distance appeared two cyclists wheeling toward them. Tennyson immediately took alarm, and, turning to Morris, growled out, "Oh, Morris, what shall I do? Those fellows are sure to bother me!" Thereupon Morris drew him protectively to his side. "Keep close to me," he said. "I'll see that they don't bother you." The cyclists came on, sped by without a sign, and presently disappeared on the horizon. There was a moment or two of silence, and then Tennyson, evidently huffed that he had attracted no attention, once more growled out, "They never even looked at me."

—Le Gallienne, *The Romantic '90s.*

But in painting as in poetry, all the new movements of value are escapes from professionalism; and they begin by shocking the public because they seem to make the art too easy. Dickens was horrified by an early work of Millais; Ruskin was enraged by a Nocturne of Whistler. He said it was cockney impudence because it lacked the professionalism he expected. Artists and critics alike are always binding burdens on the arts; and they are always angry with the artist who cuts the burden off his back. They think he is merely shirking difficulties. But the difficulty of expression is so much greater than the self-imposed difficulties of mere professionalism

that any man who is afraid of difficulties will try to be a professional rather than an artist.[1]

Note how in the following the specific instances are worked into the completed pattern of thought, to support, to make valid, and to add interest to the general statements at the beginning and end.

In the mind of every forcible writer there are certain predilections which determine the current of his thoughts and select and shape his imagery. These predilections result from sensitive spots in the author's nature, or from early and powerful impressions stamped upon the mind. Mental images conceived in some vivid moment of joy and sorrow haunt the chambers of the brain, ghosts of some forgotten experience, which create the metaphase and fashion the vision of the writer. Early experiences, moments of intense feeling, permanently color one's imagination and mark out the channels of future thought. In some luminous and perhaps forgotten hours Homer felt the beauty of the sea and the mystery of the moving air, and ever afterwards their magic recurred in his songs. Virgil was peculiarly affected by the beauty of the trees. The loveliness of flowers touched repeatedly and vigorously the highly strung chords of Keats's nature; their fragrance and charm pervade his poetry, refine and mould his imagery, and at all times most effectively comfort him. Poe found nothing so arresting as the death of a beautiful woman. Writing of Da Vinci, Walter Pater declares, "Two ideas were especially fixed in him as reflexes of things which had touched his brain in childhood beyond the measure of other impressions—the smiling of women and the motion of great waters." A knowledge of these shades of former experiences, which like invisible helpers of Vulcan, work constantly in the hidden chambers of imagery, forging ideas into shape and heating out the brilliant sparks of fancy, admits us indeed into an author's workshop, where we feel like spies, noting forbidden secrets.

—C. A. Dinsmore, *Life of Dante.*

Particulars and Details.—A very common and effective method of conveying explicit meaning is to be found in the paragraph of *particulars* and *details*. Here the idea

[1] A. Clutton-Brock, "Professionalism in Art," in *Essays on Art.*

is made to evolve by first stating the general idea, and then giving it in sections, as it were. Thus the face of the old apple dealer "has a frost-bitten aspect." That is not enough to arouse definite sense impressions nor to appease our curiosity. What are the marks of the frost-bitten aspect? Only when the writer gives these particulars is that keen hunger for detail which we all possess satisfied. In the following paragraph the general statement that Trudeau lived the life of the people is made interesting and convincing by the citing of exact details of that life as he lived it.

During these early years Trudeau lived the life of the people in many ways. Being restored to health, he hunted and fished with the other sons of the wilderness. Every year up to 1913 he brought home his string of trout and killed his buck. His skill with the rifle was remarkable; it was a natural gift. On one occasion he out-matched all competitors, then, on a challenge, picked off his own empty cartridge shells suspended from the branch of a tree on strings. And as for boxing, it is said that one evening at Paul Smith's a local champion coaxed the doctor to put on the gloves. "I promise not to hurt ye," said the amateur bruiser. Where the doctor acquired the gentle art no one seems to know; but when the local champion picked himself up at the end of the bout, he allowed that "the doctor's the quickest thing with the mitts I ever run up ag'in!"

—CHALMERS, *The Beloved Physician.*

Through the effective use of particulars and details, Le Gallienne shows that Wilde was exotic in appearance, but not the lily-like æsthete he had been advertised.

At that time Wilde had abandoned his knee-breeches and was dressed in a sort of Georgian costume, with tight pantaloon trousers and a huge stock. His amber-coloured hair, naturally straight, was not very long, and was unashamedly curled and massively modelled to his head, somewhat suggesting a wig. His large figure, with his big loose face, grossly jawed, with thick, sensuous lips, and a certain fat effeminacy about him, suggested a sort of caricature Dionysus

disguised as a rather heavy dandy of the Regency period. There was something grotesquely excessive about his whole appearance, and while he was in a way handsome, he made one think of an enormous doll, a preposterous, exaggerated puppet such as smile foolishly from floats at the Nice carnival. But his strong, humorous, haughty eyes, his good brow and fine nose must not be forgotten from the general effect, nor his superb and rather insolent *aplomb,* which early dominated his audience. And, of course, his wonderful golden voice, which he modulated with elaborate self-consciousness. Exotic as he was, he was at the same time something entirely different from the dilettante, lily-like "æsthete" we had expected, . . .

—*The Romantic '90s.*

In his *Walden,* Thoreau enumerates in detail the sounds he can distinguish on a summer afternoon. This is a case where no topic statement is expressed, but the impression is nevertheless unified and definite.

As I sit at my window this summer afternoon, hawks are circling about my clearing; the tantivy of wild pigeons, flying by twos and threes athwart my view, or perching restless on the white-pine boughs behind my house, gives a voice to the air; a fishhawk dimples the glassy surface of the pond and brings up a fish; a mink steals out of the marsh before my door and seizes a frog by the shore; the sedge is bending under the weight of the reed-birds flitting hither and thither; and for the last half hour I have heard the rattle of railroad cars, now dying away and then reviving like the beat of a partridge, conveying travellers from Boston to the country. For I did not live so out of the world as that boy who, as I hear, was put out to a farmer in the east part of the town, but ere long ran away and came home again, quite down at the heel and homesick. He had never seen such a dull and out-of-the-way place; the folks were all gone off; why, you couldn't even hear the whistle! I doubt if there is such a place in Massachusetts now:—

> In truth, our village has become a butt
> For one of those fleet railroad shafts, and o'er
> Our peaceful plain its soothing sound is—
> Concord.

Comparison and Contrast.—Certain related units of thought can be best developed through comparison and contrast. Through comparison and contrast, ideas are made to stand out in sharp distinction. Just as in the physical world it is possible to get a more just conception of size, distances, and so forth, through considering two or more individual objects side by side, and noting their likenesses and differences, so in writing we often see and understand objects of thought best through the comparative method. Note the effectiveness of the two following paragraphs. The first is developed by comparison, the second by contrast:

Traditional Chinese education was, in some respects, similar to that of Athens in its best days. Athenian boys were made to learn Homer by heart from beginning to end; Chinese boys were made to learn the Confucian Classics with similar thoroughness. Athenians were taught a kind of reverence for the gods which consisted in outward observances, and placed no barrier in the way of free intellectual speculation. Similarly the Chinese were taught certain rites connected with ancestor-worship, but were by no means obliged to have the beliefs which the rites would seem to imply. An easy and elegant scepticism was the attitude expected of an educated adult: anything might be discussed, but it was a trifle vulgar to reach very positive conclusions. Opinions should be such as could be discussed pleasantly at dinner, not such as men would fight for. Carlyle calls Plato "a lordly Athenian gentleman, very much at his ease in Zion." This characteristic of being "at his ease in Zion" is also found in Chinese sages, and is, as a rule, absent from the sages produced by Christian civilizations, except when, like Goethe, they have deeply imbibed the spirit of Hellenism. The Athenians and the Chinese alike, wished to enjoy life, and had a conception of enjoyment which was refined by an exquisite sense of beauty.

There were, however, great differences between the two civilizations, owing to the fact that, broadly speaking, the Greeks were energetic and the Chinese lazy. The Greeks devoted their energies

to art and science and mutual extermination, in all of which they achieved unprecedented success. Politics and patriotism afforded practical outlets for Greek energy; when a politician was ousted, he led a band of exiles to attack his native city. When a Chinese official was disgraced, he retired to the hills and wrote poems on the pleasures of country life. Accordingly, the Greek civilization destroyed itself, but the Chinese civilization could only be destroyed from without. These differences, however, seem not wholly attributable to education, since Confucianism in Japan never produced the indolent cultured scepticism which characterized the Chinese literati, except in the Kyoto nobility, who formed a kind of Faubourg Saint Germain.

—Bertrand Russell, *Education and the Good Life.*

The method of comparison and contrast becomes especially useful in describing and characterizing persons, as may be observed from the following examples:

There are two Flauberts. One was born on the 12th of December, 1821, in the surgeon's house at Rouen hospital; the other in enthusiastic minds in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. One was a broad, big-boned, lovable, rather simple-minded man, with the look and the laugh of a farmer, who spent his life in agonies over the intensive culture of half a dozen curiously assorted volumes; the other was an incorporeal giant, a symbol, a war-cry, a banner under which a youthful army marched and marches still to the rout of the *bourgeois* and the revolution of literature.

—J. M. Murry, *Countries of the Mind.*

Soon after came coffee. Tennyson grew impatient, moved his great gaunt body about, and finally was left to smoke a pipe. It is hard to fix the difference between the two men, both with their strong provincial accent—Gladstone with his rich flexible voice, Tennyson with his deep drawl rising into an impatient falsetto when put out; Gladstone arguing, Tennyson putting in a prejudice; Gladstone asserting rashly, Tennyson denying with a bold negative; Gladstone full of facts, Tennyson relying on impressions; both of them humorous, but the one polished and delicate in repartee, the other broad and coarse and grotesque. Gladstone's hands are white

and not remarkable. Tennyson's are huge, unwieldy, fit for moulding clay or dough. Gladstone is in some sort, a man of the world; Tennyson a child, and treated by him like a child.

—SYMONDS, *Letters and Papers.*

Analogy.—An analogy is a special form of comparison. It is an extended comparison in which a thing is shown to be like something else, perhaps otherwise dissimilar, in one or more particulars. Paragraphs of analogy are useful in explanations of remote or abstruse subjects. An analogy can be of service, however, only so far as the thing with which the unknown is compared is perfectly familiar to the reader. To try to explain the known by the unknown is like asking the blind to lead the blind. An example of successful analogy occurs in this paragraph from Gilbert Murray:

Think of life as a vast . . . engineering workshop. . . . Then think of oneself walking through it. You know how the average man walks through a museum or a workshop when he knows nothing particular about it. You try hard to be intelligent; failing in that, you try to conceal your lack of intelligence. You would like to be interested, but you do not know what is interesting and what is not. Some of the specimens strike you as pretty; some of the engines seem to you very powerful; you are dazzled and amused by the blaze of the fires, you are secretly interested in the men and wish you could talk to them. But in the main you come out at the other end tired and rather dispirited and having got remarkably little out of it. That is the way a stupid and uneducated man, with no one to help him, goes through life.[1]

Reasons.—Certain ideas if stated without support provoke a challenge. In such cases the paragraph is naturally developed by giving reasons. In the first of the following quotations Lowell tells why he found the *Natural History of Selborne* interesting. In the second, Hawthorne states his reasons for a belief that the world needs sleep.

[1] "Literature as Revelation," in *Tradition and Progress.*

One of the most delightful books in my father's library was White's *Natural History of Selborne*. For me it has rather gained in charm with years. I used to read it without knowing the secret of the pleasure I found in it, but as I grow older I begin to detect some of the simple expedients of this natural magic. Open the book where you will, it takes you out of doors. In our broiling July weather one can walk out with this genially garrulous Fellow of Oriel and find refreshment instead of fatigue. We have no trouble in keeping abreast of him as he ambles along on his hobby-horse, now pointing to a pretty view, now stopping to watch the motions of a bird or an insect, or to bag a specimen for the Honorable Daines Barrington or Mr. Pennant. In simplicity of taste and natural refinement he reminds one of Walton; in tenderness toward what he would have called the brute creation, of Cowper.[1]

Were I to adopt a pet idea, as so many people do, and fondle it in my embraces to the exclusion of all others, it would be that the great want which mankind labors under at this present period is sleep. The world should recline its vast head on the first convenient pillow and take an age-long nap. It has gone distracted through a morbid activity, and, while preternaturally wide awake, is nevertheless tormented by visions that seem real to it now, but would assume their true aspect and character were all things once set right by an interval of sound repose. This is the only method of getting rid of old delusions and avoiding new ones; of regenerating our race, so that it might in due time awake as an infant out of dewy slumber; of restoring to us the simple perception of what is right, and the single-hearted desire to achieve it, both of which have long been lost in consequence of this weary activity of brain and torpor or passion of the heart that now afflict the universe. Stimulants, the only mode of treatment hitherto attempted, cannot quell the disease; they do but heighten the delirium.

—HAWTHORNE, *Mosses from an Old Manse.*

Refutation.—Writers attacking false ideas, or ideas and statements they consider false, put their arguments into paragraphs which are, for convenience, called para-

[1] "My Garden Acquaintance," in LOWELL'S *Literary Essays.*

graphs of refutation. There is an excellent example in the following from Lowell:

I have little sympathy with declaimers about the Pilgrim Fathers, who look upon them all as men of grand conceptions and superhuman foresight. An entire ship's company of Columbuses is what the world never saw. It is not wise to form any theory and fit our facts to it, as a man in a hurry is apt to cram his travelling-bag, with a total disregard of shape or texture. But perhaps it may be found that the facts will only fit comfortably together on a single plan, namely, that the fathers did have a conception (which those will call grand who regard simplicity as a necessary element of grandeur) of founding here a commonwealth on those two eternal bases of Faith and Work; that they had, indeed, no revolutionary ideas of universal liberty, but yet what answered the purpose quite as well, an abiding faith in the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God; and that they did not so much propose to make all things new, as to develop the latent possibilities of English law and English character, by clearing away the fences by which the abuse of the one was gradually discommoning the other from the broad fields of natural right. They were not in advance of their age, as it is called, for no one who is so can ever work profitably in it; but they were alive to the highest and most earnest thinking of their time.[1]

In giving the preceding examples, there has been no pretense of exhausting the possibilities of variety in paragraph structure. And there has been no attempt at complete classification according to whether the paragraph has been used for narrative, expository, descriptive, or argumentative purposes. Paragraphs upon the printed page grow as they have formed themselves in the mind of the writer, and they will vary as to method of development and function according to the subject matter, the materials, and the purpose of the author. Such examples as have been given, and many more like them, are worth careful and continued study and should form the starting

[1] "New England Two Centuries Ago," in LOWELL'S *Literary Essays*, 1865, pp. 75-76.

point for habitual observation of paragraph building and a more serious attention to one's own tendencies in expressing units of thought in paragraphs.

IV

Material and Principles

There are one or two considerations that should be useful to the student about to begin practice in writing paragraphs.

First, just what and how much material should go into a paragraph? This depends largely upon how thoroughly and exhaustively the writer wishes to develop a given topic or subdivision of a topic (either in and by itself or in relation to other topics in the composition). For example, the sentence, "The most important period in a man's education is his first six years," might stand by itself as all its author wished to say on this particular subject. It might, however, serve as the topic for a long paragraph, or if the writer were especially interested in the idea he might easily extend his discussion to an entire essay; and if he considered it very important and had thought and read about it long enough, he might write a book on the topic, as Bertrand Russell in his *Education and the Good Life* has recently done. It is all a matter of proportion and emphasis and intention. It is a fact that many longer essays, plays, and books of various sorts are the outgrowth of earlier brief expressions. Thus Amy Lowell's two-volume biography of Keats had its beginning in a single lecture delivered at the time of Keats's centenary celebration. Augustus Thomas first wrote his "The Witching Hour" as a one-act play; he put it away, he tells us, but later he would take it from its drawer and "fondle it" occasionally, until presently it grew into a full-length four-act drama ready for an evening's perform-

ance. So there is no rule for the amount of material to be put into a paragraph; it all depends upon the purpose of the writer and the minuteness with which he chooses to treat his subject.

Three important principles to be observed in the writing of paragraphs should be emphasized:

1. *Proportion:* A paragraph will be long or short in proportion to other paragraphs in the theme, first, according to the difficulty of its thought and the space required to convey its central idea; second, according to the relative emphasis the writer wishes to give it in comparison with other ideas in corresponding paragraphs.

2. *Variety:* Paragraphs should not be all long or short, nor should they be all built alike. The practiced writer will seldom write three long paragraphs in succession, nor will he ordinarily permit himself a series of very brief paragraphs. In the better styles, short and long paragraphs often alternate, not regularly, but according to the exigencies of the thought. This is a natural and logical result: it is seldom that the different topics in a theme are of equal importance. In construction, too, paragraphs should vary. A succession of paragraphs developed in parallel structure, for instance, would be wearisome, would be, moreover, monotonous and artificial.

3. *Unity:* The paragraph, first, last, and always, must possess organic unity. It must contain a central idea, and that central idea must be conveyed to the mind of the reader in the fullest perfection possible. That is the only possible excuse for writing paragraphs at all: to transfer adequately and effectively units of mental experience from one mind to another. The paragraph, then, whatever its form, must be a closely-knit structure of related sentences containing a single unit of related thought, all of one

piece, like a living tissue, no part of which may be removed without injuring the whole. If it is a narrative paragraph, it advances the story one definite stage; if it is descriptive, it conveys a single mental image or impression; if expository, it presents and makes clear some one thought or idea; if argumentative, it seeks to prove the truth or falsity of a given idea. But always the paragraph has for its function the presentation of a related unit of thought in an orderly march toward the progressive unfolding of a larger unity.

EXERCISES IN PARAGRAPHS

1. Study a chapter of one of Joseph Conrad's novels for paragraphing. Does his story consistently move forward one stage with every paragraph? Study in the same way novels by John Galsworthy, Hugh Walpole, George Eliot, Nathaniel Hawthorne.

2. In these same novels, or others like them, study paragraphs that describe persons, places, or things. Try putting the main impression of each of a half dozen of these into one word, or phrase, or sentence.

3. Read an essay from Huxley, Newman, Ruskin, Woodrow Wilson, Alexander Smith, or Agnes Repplier, and identify a dozen paragraphs as to method of development.

4. In each of these same paragraphs find the topic statement. Observe the location of this statement; is it at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the paragraph? If there is no topic statement, write a sentence containing the central idea.

5. Study the paragraphing of a newspaper as found, first, in its editorials; second, in its leading news article.

6. Examine the paragraphing of a full-page advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post, Harper's Monthly Magazine,* your daily paper.

7. Examine the paragraphing of a contract, an affidavit, or some other legal document.

8. Write a paragraph in which you define three of the following terms:

Highbrow	Rhetoric	Exotic
A Birdie	Fascisti	Monomania
Paragraph	Coal	Kleptomania
A Dean	A Rookie	Anthropomorphic
A Valetudinarian	Poetry	Misanthrope
The Younger Generation	Matriculation	Uxorious
Bubble	Claustrophobia	Psychopathic
	Cold	

9. Write paragraphs developed by (a) general explication; (b) illustration, either specific or general; (c) particulars and details; (d) reasons; (e) comparison; (f) contrast; and (g) analogy.

10. What does the author set out to accomplish in each of the following paragraphs? What means does he use to achieve his aim? Does he succeed? Is there a topic statement? Point it out; underline it.

> One of the perennial problems that will confront Congress, and is now worrying President Coolidge, is that of keeping our merchant marine afloat without either government ownership or large subsidies. The interesting suggestion has just been made by so notable an authority as Edward N. Hurley, Chairman of the Shipping Board during the war, that our railroads be urged to help settle the problem by adding transatlantic fleets to their transportation lines. He thinks that some of our great railroads could handle a land-and-water transportation business as well as the Canadian Pacific is doing it. President Coolidge, according to the Washington correspondents, is deeply impressed by the Hurley suggestion. A New York *Times* correspondent understands that the President feels "there might be a disadvantage in allowing railroads to own shipyards, as such ownership might militate against railroads not owning ships, and also to the disadvantage of shippers on railroads which have no ships." Writing in the Washington *Post,* Carlisle Bargeron says that no legislation will be necessary to carry out the Hurley suggestion: "The Panama Canal Act provides that no railroad may operate a steamship company which might stifle competi-

tion, but so far as is known there is nothing to prevent the railroads from operating transatlantic lines or vessels to South and Central America or any other part of the globe." The whole question, in this writer's opinion, would "turn upon whether the railroads would submit satisfactory bids for Shipping Board vessels."

If nobody could achieve that education which is the understanding of life except by perfect methods, our world would be in a bad case. There are no perfect methods. Some are better than others; that is as much as one can say. Getting understanding of life is a catch-as-catch-can job. No doubt capacity for it is in some degree inherited, though in a good many cases where the exploit seems to have been performed the inheritance is very obscure. For rich boys the contact with actual life seems rather more difficult than for poor boys, nevertheless, both kinds win it and both kinds miss it. President Coolidge, for example, is something of a mystery. What he has and what he lacks have been much discussed without general acceptance of any conclusion. The truth probably is that he has understanding of life in the particular domain in which he operates—that, being what he is, knowing what he does, he knows what to do under the circumstances which confront him. So many people think that his sagacity lies mainly in keeping off the ice until it is strong enough to bear him, that his advancement is often attributed by the near-wise to luck; but there is Mr. Morrow, in whose career luck is seldom thought of as a determining factor, who even in his college days had the sort of understanding to see the something in Calvin Coolidge which encouraged a large expectation.[1]

As many students are failures in college from having too little money as from having too much. If one cannot go to college without working to help support himself he should, of course, assume this added burden without self-pity or self-praise. It is simply an unfortunate condition which must be met. I say "unfortunate" because I have seen few

[1] MARTIN, EDWARD S., "Understanding of Life," *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1928.

students who have really been helped by having to support themselves while pursuing their studies, and I have seen many who have gone on the rocks because of it. What he gains in independence and self-reliance by working his way through college he more often loses in culture and breadth of thinking power. He ought not to live in college, however, more comfortably and luxuriously than he will be able to live on the salary he will earn when he gets out of college.

"Parents cannot create talent or genius," declares Doctor Cox, "but they can greatly discourage, or even suppress it! Also, they can encourage and develop it, a fact I should like every present-day parent to know. Liebig, the great German chemist, was taken by his father to see all sorts of manufacturing operations. Benjamin Franklin's father took him to see what could be seen of the world's work. This intelligent interest on the part of the parents gave these two boys a chance to become familiar with numerous activities and occupations. The same sort of thing was true with many other boys who later became famous. It is a great mistake to exclude children from adult interests. We should bring them in contact with conditions they are going to meet in real life."

Asthma is not a disease. It means simply that something is wrong in the body. It is a spasm of the muscles of the bronchial tubes leading to the lung, or it is a swelling of the mucous membrane lining the inner surface of the tubes. This spasm or swelling does not greatly interfere with the entrance of air into the lungs, but does interfere with its leaving them. It is frequently preceded by coughing. During the attack there is much noise in the chest, and that noise is best described by the word wheezing. The lips become blue, and if the attack is severe and prolonged the entire body may become the color of a blueberry. This color is due to the inability of the sufferer to aërate his lungs with fresh air.

For the first thing which a scholar should bear in mind is that a book ought not to be read for mere amusement.

Half-educated persons read for amusement, and are not to be blamed for it; they are incapable of appreciating the deeper qualities that belong to a really great literature. But a young man who has passed through a course of university training should discipline himself at an early age never to read for mere amusement. And once the habit of the discipline has been formed, he will even find it impossible to read for mere amusement. He will then impatiently throw down any book from which he cannot obtain certain intellectual food, any book that does not make an appeal to the higher emotions and to the intellect. But on the other hand, the habit of reading for amusement becomes with thousands of people exactly the same kind of habit as wine-drinking or opium-smoking; it is like a narcotic, something that helps to pass the time, something that keeps up a perpetual condition of dreaming, something that eventually results in destroying all capacity for thought, giving exercise only to the surface parts of the mind, and leaving the deeper springs of feeling and the higher faculties of perception unemployed.

—Lafcadio Hearn, *Talks to Writers.*

Not all rhythm is the same. It is the difference in rhythm which makes the difference in dances. When you waltz, for instance, you have the pulsations or beats in groups of three with the accent or "heavy beat" on the first beat of each group, as *one,* two, three; *one,* two, three; while in the two-step and modern fox-trot the pulsations are in groups of twos with the accent on the first beat of each group, as *one,* two; *one,* two; *one,* two, and so forth.

It does not seem reasonable to me that a creation which has been going on for billions and billions of years, in so far as we can tell, for the very purpose of producing that wonderful soul, should cause the soul—your soul and my soul—to exist only as long as our physical bodies exist. Although science does not offer mathematical proof of the immortality of the soul, it gives us plenty of food for

thought and belief, plenty of grounds for intelligent hope. And it adds to our conviction that our physical life is only a stage in the existence of the soul.

In my opinion, all scientific evidence tends to show—not to prove, but to point toward the belief—that it is very unlikely that the soul of man is going to cease its existence when the body perishes. The law of continuity and the general scientific view of the universe tend, I think, to strengthen our belief that the human soul goes on existing, and developing, after death.

A great many men and women—let us frankly admit it, in spite of all our humanitarian and democratic prejudices—do not want to be cultured, are not interested in the higher life. For these people existence on the lower, animal levels is perfectly satisfactory. Given food, drink, the company of their fellows, sexual enjoyment, and plenty of noisy distractions from without, they are happy. They enjoy bodily, but hate mental, exercise. They cannot bear to be alone, or to think. Contemporary urban life, with its jazz bands, its negroid dancing, its movies, theaters, football matches, newspapers, and the like, is for them ideal. They can live out their lives without once being solitary, without once making a serious mental effort (for the work which most of these people do is mainly mechanical and requires little or no thought), without once being out of sight or sound of some ready-made distraction. The notion that one can derive pleasure from arduous intellectual occupations is to such people merely absurd. More leisure and more prosperity mean for them more dancing, more parties, more movies, more distractions in general. Most of the inhabitants of ancient Rome belonged to this type; so probably do most of the inhabitants of modern New York and London. And unless some system of eugenics is practised in the interval, there is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of the great cities in the year 3000 A. D. will be radically different.

11. The sentences in the following paragraphs have been displaced from their original order. Rearrange them with a view to the most logical and effective development of idea.

The average American's stock of knowledge about India is rather tartly said to include the fact that Mahatma Gandhi lives in that country and that tigers and elephants are found there. But his fund of information is being surprizingly increased by the discoveries made about the social life of India by Katherine Mayo, an American writer, whose book, entitled *Mother India,* has aroused the bitterest kind of criticism in some sections of the Indian press and has also provoked certain legislative protests. In explaining the object of her inquiry into Indian conditions, Miss Mayo says outright that she leaves untouched the realms of religion, of politics, and of the arts, and confines herself to the study of such "workaday ground as public health and its contributing factors." India is nearly half as large as the United States, we are reminded, but its population is three times that of the United States. She quotes Mahatma Gandhi, the famous apostle of self-rule in India, as saying: "Let us not put off everything until Swaraj (self-rule) is attained and thus put off Swaraj itself. Swaraj can be had only by brave and clean people."

His clothes were almost shabby and were worn with an oblivion to self-consciousness. His linen, though spotless, was slightly rumpled, and in one place frayed. His necktie was awry. His coat sagged at the pockets, which plainly were used as panniers, and his trousers had not been pressed by a tailor for many days. He looked extremely boyish, due partly to the unruly wisp of hair that poked out at the back of his crown, beyond the thick thatch which had been plastered into order with wet brushes. He was not a very dashing looking person. Suddenly she realized that her white face and green shaded eyes, her doeskin riding breeches of Fifth Avenue cut, and her mannish hat, marked her apart from the other girls

present. She started to speak to him, but his attention was suddenly claimed by a big woman who was obviously a school teacher. He stared at her for what seemed a long time. Used as she was to going about in her screen costumes and make-up, she had forgotten that here she was perhaps conspicuous.

Great taste and knowledge of subtle harmony are shown in the color combinations. One sees together delightful tones of mauve and pervenche blue and amber, with accents of burnt orange and black woven in silk on a soft cream-colored ground. Similar to these in pattern are yellow ones, in all the shades from palest gold to deepest ochre, with touches of violet, plum color, and sage green. The colors are obtained solely from vegetable dyes, and include not only the clear strong colors loved by all primitive peoples, but exquisite pastel colors, as well. The glowing crimson so much used is particularly beautiful, and many of the most striking designs are carried out in it. It is frequently combined with a soft shade of violet, to which is sometimes added a touch of yellow. These are on a cream ground of linenlike texture, and are occasionally made with narrow lengthwise stripes of red-violet.

This color scheme is employed in guipiles like the one with the animal motifs illustrated.

PARAGRAPH LENGTH

12. Study any dozen paragraphs from one of Macaulay's essays to find the relationship between the length of the paragraph and the volume of idea in it.

13. Watch in your reading other than fiction for a style in which the paragraph is prevailingly short or prevailingly long. What difference in effect do you perceive? (Van Loon's *Story of the Bible*, Durant's *Story of Philosophy*, Ludwig's *Bismarck*, the stories of Ernest Hemingway and Ambrose Bierce, and Powys' *The Religion of a Skeptic* are good books to look into for such a study.)

14. In some of our modern books of fiction the paragraphs are nearly all short—so short, in fact, that the term *paragraphic style* has been invented to describe such writing. Some critics feel that

this method may easily be overdone; they call such a style *mannered*—artificial. Can you justify it?

THE NARRATIVE PARAGRAPH

15. Turn to the examples of narrative given in this book in the chapter on Narration and study the paragraphs. How do they differ from expository and descriptive paragraphs in structure, length, function? In the same manner study the news story of the funeral of Florence Mills in Chapter III.

Would you accept the characterization of the narrative paragraph given on page 112 as practically all that can be definitely said of such a variable form?

16. Bring to class a set of paragraphs illustrating a half dozen different methods of development. Show in each case what the author sets out to do in his paragraph: Is he giving reasons? Is he defining a term or an idea? Is he answering a question? Is he unfolding an idea? etc.

Compare these paragraphs from the point of view of success in presenting units of arranged thinking.

17. Study the following paragraphs from the point of view of method of development, of structure, and of success. Try writing similar paragraphs about two persons, two buildings, or any two things of interest to you which would lend themselves to such treatment.

> Each was stern in his judgment of the other. To Gladstone, Disraeli was a man without religion and without political faith. To Disraeli, Gladstone was a man of assumed piety, who cloaked his skill in maneuvering with feigned scruples. Gladstone had all his days lived a model Sunday school life. At Eton he said his prayers, morning and evening. At Oxford the young men drank less in 1840 because Gladstone had been up in 1830. In Parliament he had immediately been the studious pupil and Peel's beloved disciple. Disraeli had lived a vagabond's life, in schools and politics alike. He had known the money lenders' parlors before those of ministers and bishops. Disraeli's enemies said he was not an honest man; Gladstone's enemies said of him that he was an honest

man in the worst sense of the word. Disraeli's foes said that he was not a Christian; Gladstone's said that he might be an excellent Christian but that he was assuredly a detestable pagan. Disraeli had learned to know his Molière, his Voltaire; Gladstone regarded *Tartuffe* as a third-rate comedy. The cynical Disraeli whispered in the ear of the aged and austere Mr. Bright, as he helped him into his overcoat, "After all, Mr. Bright, we both know very well what brings you and me here—ambition." Gladstone unconsciously assured himself, "Well, I do not think I can tax myself with ever having been much moved by ambition." It was said of Gladstone that he could convince others of many things and himself of anything at all. Disraeli could persuade others but was powerless over himself. Gladstone liked to choose an abstract principle and from that to deduce his preferences. His tendency was to believe that his desires were those of the Almighty. He was reproached, not so much for always having the ace of trumps up his sleeve as for claiming that God had put it there.

Each misread the other. Gladstone accepted as true all the cynical professions of faith which Disraeli set forth as a challenge. Disraeli put down as hypocritical the phrases by which Gladstone duped himself in all good faith. Disraeli, the doctrinaire, prided himself on being an opportunist. Gladstone, the opportunist, prided himself on being a doctrinaire. Disraeli affected to despise reason, but reasoned well. Gladstone, who believed himself a reasoner, acted only through passion. Gladstone with a great fortune still kept his account of daily expenses. Disraeli with his heavy debts spent his money without counting it. Both were fond of Dante, but Disraeli turned chiefly to the *Inferno,* Gladstone to the *Paradiso.* Disraeli had the name of being frivolous, but was taciturn in society. Gladstone, who was supposed to be grave, was so charming in company with his ready talk that, to be able to go on hating him, one had to avoid meeting him. Gladstone was interested in two things only —religion and finance. Disraeli was interested in hundreds

of things, religion and finance only units among them. Neither of the pair believed in the other's religious convictions, and there again they were both wrong. And finally, Disraeli would have been much surprised if he had known that Mr. Gladstone and his wife, when they had reason to be particularly merry, would stand in front of the fire, clasping hands and swaying as they sang:

A Ragamuffin husband and a rantipoling wife,
We'll fiddle it and scrape it through the ups and downs
of life!

—André Maurois, *Disraeli.*

18. Study the following selection for paragraphing. How is each paragraph developed? Find a topic statement for each. Where none is expressed, try writing one.

Are these paragraphs varied in structure? Show wherein they differ from each other.

A GREEN HILL FAR AWAY

Was it indeed only last March, or in another life, that I climbed this green hill on that day of dolour, the Sunday after the last great German offensive began? A beautiful sun-warmed day it was, when the wild thyme on the southern slope smelled sweet, and the distant sea was a glitter of gold. Lying on the grass, pressing my cheek to its warmth, I tried to get solace for that new dread which seemed so cruelly unnatural after four years of war-misery.

'If only it were all over!' I said to myself; 'and I could come here, and to all the lovely places I know, without this awful contraction of the heart, and this knowledge that at every tick of my watch some human body is being mangled or destroyed. Ah, if only I could! Will there never be an end?'

And now there is an end, and I am up on this green hill once more in December sunlight, with the distant sea a glitter of gold. And there is no cramp in my heart, no

miasma clinging to my senses. Peace! It is still incredible. No more to hear with the ears of the nerves the ceaseless roll of gunfire, or see with the eyes of the nerves drowning men, gaping wounds, and death. Peace, actually Peace! The war has gone on so long that many of us have forgotten the sense of outrage and amazement we had, those first days of August, 1914, when it all began. But I have not forgotten, nor ever shall.

In some of us—I think in many who could not voice it—the war has left chiefly this feeling: 'If only I could find a country where men cared less for all that they seem to care for, where they cared more for beauty, for nature, for being kindly to each other. If only I could find that green hill far away!' Of the songs of Theocritus, of the life of St. Francis, there is no more among the nations than there is of dew on grass in an east wind. If we ever thought otherwise, we are disillusioned now. Yet there is Peace again, and the souls of men fresh-murdered are not flying into our lungs with every breath we draw.

Each day this thought of Peace becomes more real and blessed. I can lie on this green hill and praise Creation that I am alive in a world of beauty. I can go to sleep up here with the coverlet of sunlight warm on my body, and not wake to that old dull misery. I can even dream with a light heart, for my fair dreams will not be spoiled by waking, and my bad dreams will be cured the moment I open my eyes. I can look up at that blue sky without seeing trailed across it a mirage of the long horror, a film picture of all the things that have been done by men to men. At last I can gaze up at it, limpid and blue, without a dogging melancholy; and I can gaze down at that far gleam of sea, knowing that there is no murk of murder on it any more.

And the flight of birds, the gulls and rooks and little brown wavering things which flit out and along the edge of the chalk-pits, is once more refreshment to me, utterly untempered. A merle is singing in a bramble thicket; the dew has not yet dried off the bramble leaves. A feather of a moon floats across the sky; the distance sends forth

homely murmurs; the sun warms my cheeks. And all of this is pure joy. No hawk of dread and horror keeps swooping down and bearing off the little birds of happiness. No accusing conscience starts forth and beckons me away from pleasure. Everywhere is supreme and flawless beauty. Whether one looks at this tiny snail-shell, marvellously chased and marked, a very elf's horn whose open mouth is coloured rose; or gazes down at the flat land between here and the sea, wandering under the smile of the afternoon sunlight, seeming almost to be alive, hedgeless with its many watching trees, and silver gulls hovering above the mushroom-coloured 'ploughs,' and fields green in manifold hues; whether one muses on this little pink daisy born so out of time, or watches that valley of brown-rose-grey woods, under the drifting shadows of low-hanging chalky clouds—all is perfect, as only Nature can be perfect on a lovely day, when the mind of him who looks on her is at rest.

On this green hill I am nearer than I have been yet to realisation of the difference between war and peace. In our civilian lives hardly anything has been changed—we do not get more butter or more petrol, the garb and machinery of war still shroud us, journals still drip hate; but in our spirits there is all the difference between gradual dying and gradual recovery from sickness.

At the beginning of the war a certain artist, so one heard, shut himself away in his house and garden, taking in no newspaper, receiving no visitors, listening to no breath of the war, seeing no sight of it. So he lived, buried in his work and his flowers—I know not for how long. Was he wise, or did he suffer even more than the rest of us who shut nothing away? Can man, indeed, shut out the very quality of his firmament, or bar himself away from the general misery of his species?

This gradual recovery of the world—this slow reopening of the great flower, Life—is beautiful to feel and see. I press my hand flat and hard down on those blades of grass, then take it away, and watch them very slowly

raise themselves and shake off the bruise. So it is, and will be, with us for a long time to come. The cramp of war was deep in us, as an iron frost in the earth. Of all the countless millions who have fought and nursed and written and spoken and dug and sewn and worked in a thousand other ways to help on the business of killing, hardly any have laboured in real love of war. Ironical, indeed, that perhaps the most beautiful poem written these four years, Julian Grenfell's 'Into Battle!' was in heartfelt praise of fighting! But if one could gather the deep curses breathed by man and woman upon war since the first bugle was blown, the dirge of them could not be contained in the air which wraps this earth.

And yet the 'green hill,' where dwell beauty and kindliness, is still far away. Will it ever be nearer? Men have fought even on this green hill where I am lying. By the rampart markings on its chalk and grass, it has surely served for an encampment. The beauty of day and night, the lark's song, the sweet-scented growing things, the rapture of health, and of pure air, the majesty of the stars, and the gladness of sunlight, of song and dance and simple friendliness, have never been enough for men. We crave our turbulent fate. Can wars, then, ever cease? Look in men's faces, read their writings, and beneath masks and hypocrisies note the restless creeping of the tiger spirit! There has never been anything to prevent the millenium except the nature of the human being. There are not enough lovers of beauty among men. It all comes back to that. Not enough who want the green hill far away—who naturally hate disharmony, and the greed, ugliness, restlessness, cruelty, which are its parents and its children.

Will there ever be more lovers of beauty in proportion to those who are indifferent to beauty? Who shall answer that question? Yet on the answer depends peace. Men may have a mint of sterling qualities—be vigorous, adventurous, brave, upright, and self-sacrificing; be preachers and teachers; keen, cool-headed, just, industrious—if they have not the love of beauty, they will still be making wars. Man is a fighting animal, with sense of the ridicu-

lous enough to know that he is a fool to fight, but not sense of the sublime enough to stop him. Ah, well! we have peace!

It is happiness greater than I have known for four years and four months, to lie here and let that thought go on its wings, quiet and free as the wind stealing soft from the sea, and blessed as the sunlight on this green hill.

—John Galsworthy.

Chapter VI

THE SENTENCE

In considering, then, what forms of composition are sanctioned by English grammar, —by the good use that must govern us in composing words,—I have found the most convenient plan to be this: putting aside formal grammar, I ask myself of a given construction whether it makes good sense; if it does I find it good English.—BARRETT WENDELL.

A sentence should read as if its author, had he held a plough instead of a pen could have drawn a furrow deep and straight to the end.—THOREAU.

I

GOOD SENSE AND THE CONVENTIONS

"TO BE understood is better than to be conventional," declared a young student of composition, in discussing the value of grammatical rules. And he was to a certain extent quite right. The purpose of writing and speaking is to communicate ideas and feelings, and whatever interferes with such communication is certainly not to be recommended. Yet just as commerce cannot be carried on without a common medium of exchange, so communication is impossible without an accepted body of signs and symbols, with recognized conventions for their use. This student would therefore have been stating something nearer the whole truth if he had added, "But without being conventional it is impossible to be understood." Language is, after all, but a code of signals upon which we have agreed for the more convenient interchange of thought; and unless there is something fixed about this code, unless everyone who uses it conforms rather closely

to it, we shall be perpetually misunderstanding each other. No writer can hope to do more than make slight additions to or modifications of the code; otherwise, he would not be understood: and to be understood is, of course, better than to be merely unconventional.

The conventions of language, in the form of words and other signs in such grammatical and rhetorical patterns as have been sanctioned by usage, are not in themselves valuable. They are valuable only when they assist in making communication less difficult; when they reduce the element of error in communication; when they increase its effectiveness.

These rules, or conventions, of linguistic usage are agreements more or less willingly entered into by all the users of a language. But, it should be remarked, people differ in the degree of support which they give to linguistic conventions, just as people differ in the support which they give to civil laws. There are those who want tight and fast rules governing all usage, who feel that perhaps we should have a learned body like the French Academy to hand down decisions as to usage which should thenceforth be binding. Many such people long for a perfect and "correct" language, and worry a good deal about the breaking down of traditional grammatical forms and about the influx of new and barbarous words. Since their ideal is a "pure" language, they are fittingly called purists. Opposing them are the liberals, who continually point out that language is a growth, that since the needs of every succeeding historical period are different from the needs of the preceding periods, the means of communication must change to fit the new needs. Between extreme conservatives who want no changes whatever and extreme liberals who want everything changed, there goes on a rather consistently lively warfare.

The right position to take upon this question is most probably a middle one. To writers of courage and dis-

crimination who have dared to break with the established customs and introduce new forms and manners into our language, English today owes much of its marvelous richness and beauty and flexibility. Fashions in language, just as in dress, change, and the history of English prose is almost a continuous story of the evolution of new fashions out of the old. In this process we have discarded many useless inflections that had come down to us from Anglo-Saxon and French; to it we owe the substitution of the simpler, more direct, more masculine style of Dryden for the silly foppery of Elizabethan euphuism; and to it we can trace the riddance of our prose from the involved Latinisms of Dr. Johnson's day, to make way for the lighter, more freely moving English of Ruskin and Newman. To it we are also indebted for thousands of new words and phrases that have added untold richness and variety to our language during the last six hundred years. Such changes are still going on. In general, the movement has been toward improvement, a gradual working in the direction of unmannered prose of freedom, grace, and power. Our early prose was especially encumbered with the Latin influence. Much of the tendency of earlier writers like Bishop Hooker, Roger Ascham, Sir Thomas Browne, Bishop Taylor, and Dr. Johnson to use stiff, heavy, unoral English may be traced to their classical studies. But from that, as Mr. L. A. Sherman says, "the race has been slowly but effectually liberating itself; so that we are today almost emancipated from mediævalism in literature as in all things else. We have nearly unlearned how to write in ponderous bookish wise, and nearly learned how to be as natural with the pen as the voice."

One thing should be remembered, however; changes have not always been for the better. For instance, the affectation of Lyly's *Euphues,* which became fashionable in the last of the sixteenth century, was, in spite of certain beneficial effects it later exercised on the language, ridicu-

lous, just as was the tendency toward high-sounding comparisons and artificial "conceits" of many writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is possible that there are, today, certain innovators at work in England and America whose results will seem as silly to a future generation as euphuism does to us. But the chances are quite as great that from these experiments there will come something useful and effective. The genius of the language will work itself out; in the hands of the greater writers and speakers of sound instinct and sure taste, it will continue its evolution toward a more and more nearly perfect tool for the expression of thought.

Another fact to be borne in mind is that these changes, especially those of so-called modern English, have come gradually, and as an outgrowth, not a repudiation, of what has gone before; and in this process where certain customs and usages have been dropped, others have come to be more and more firmly established. It is with such usages as these, the conventions recognized as binding in his own day, that a student must learn to reckon. These usages have grown out of the practice of the specially talented and skilled, and deserve the respect always due the masters of an art.[1] There never was a time, of course, when all users of a language conformed to one set of conventions. A language is at once in a state of decay and rebirth: while one set of conventions is passing away, a new set is being formed. Yet each period does have its conventions, and we have ours. It is therefore the part of wisdom for a student to recognize that, desirable as it always is to keep an experimental attitude, some curbing of his individuality

[1] It is well to remember that there are different levels of usage, with conventions fitting to each level. Thus we have English which is suitable for uneducated people; English suitable for educated people in familiar discourse; English suitable for educated people in cultivated, formal discourse. In this book, however, we are concerned almost exclusively with the English of cultivated discourse. That, we may assume, is the language of our best writers and speakers, who give us our notions of excellence.

and lawlessness is necessary; that if he is to be understood, he must write and speak in conformity with current practice. A writer is under obligation to use forms that make good sense to others. And if he is to do this, he must adopt the forms sanctioned by the majority of the best writers and speakers of his own day, that is, by Good Usage. We shall later consider Good Usage as it relates to individual words; we are here concerned with its application to combinations of words in sentences.

II

Sentences, Phrases, and Clauses

A Sentence is the smallest practicable unit of words in combination for the intelligible communication of ideas; it is therefore commonly defined as a group of words conveying a complete thought. Its grammar is the record of the combinations which our reputable writers and speakers habitually use. Grammar, therefore, does not precede, but rather follows, practice. It is liable to such changes as may be dictated from time to time by current usage; but, as has been pointed out, these changes are so gradual that the records compiled in a good recent grammar may be considered a safe guide for many years to come. Grammar is, therefore, of the greatest value to young writers, in that its careful study enables them to learn quickly and accurately the usages current among those most skilled in our language.

A working knowledge of grammar is a prerequisite to the study of rhetoric, and it is assumed that students who are ready to use this text have had at least elementary training in the principles of grammatical structure. Students who have not had such training are referred to the appendix of this book or to any good grammar. The brief discussion of grammar here given is intended merely to

refresh in the student's memory principles fundamental to an understanding of sentence structure, and facts which have direct bearing upon effective construction.

Grammar begins whenever two words are put together to assert a fact, an action, or a state of being. Its main concern is with just two things: first, that the combination of words used shall make good sense; second, that the forms of the words used in any given combination shall conform to established practice. A violation of either of these principles results in a grammatically faulty sentence.

Thus, the "Mamma . . . quick" of a child is not a good sentence, nor is his "Horse . . . run." Each makes sense in a way, but the first is incomplete in expression, lacking a verb, and the second both lacks a word and has a wrong verb form. But, "Mamma, come quick" is a correct sentence, and so is "The horse runs." The group of words,

> This case, which had excited considerable attention throughout the state, and which was of much personal interest to Reeves,

is not grammatically a sentence for the reason that it makes no sense. What did the writer mean to say about "this case"? No one knows, for he has written only a part of his sentence, having evidently forgotten what he started to say about "this case."

Every complete sentence must have two parts—a *subject* and a *predicate.* The subject of a sentence designates the person, place, or thing of which something is said; the predicate is that which is said of the subject.

Thus:

Subject	Predicate
Dogs	bark.
The grieved parents	sadly gave up the search.
The prose of Hawthorne	is the most beautiful prose that has come out of America.

Using this chart, we find that the group of words given above stands revealed as having a subject but no predicate:

Subject	Predicate
This case, which had excited considerable attention throughout the state and which was of much personal interest to Reeves	.....

Add a predication and the sentence has a definite meaning; it has been made to do its work:

This case, which had excited considerable attention throughout the state, and which was, moreover, of much personal interest to Reeves, *had finally reached the Supreme Court.*

The pattern will now be complete.

Subject	Predicate
This case, which had excited considerable attention throughout the state, and which was, moreover, of much personal interest to Reeves,	had finally reached the Supreme Court.

Phrases and Clauses.—It will be readily seen that a sentence should be carefully distinguished from a phrase or a clause. Phrases and clauses ordinarily do not in themselves make complete sense, and therefore should not stand alone as sentences, nor be punctuated as such. Students are sometimes so thoroughly taught the rule, "Every sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with a period," without being at the same time instructed in the real nature of the sentence as it has just been outlined, that they come to think this is the whole test, and fall into the error of imagining that when they have written a group of words with a capital and a period, though it is only a phrase or a clause, they have composed a sentence. It is therefore necessary at this point to look briefly at phrases

and clauses to see wherein they are different from the sentence.

Phrases.—A *Phrase* is a group of words containing neither subject nor predicate and having the function of a single part of speech. Phrases are used as adjectives, adverbs, nouns, or verbs.

As a noun:

To suggest the ordinary appearance of calm water . . . is perhaps the easiest task of art.

This same summer the pond has begun *to fall again.*

As an adjective:

The poet's state *of mind* was too like my own.

The girl *on the summit of the load* sat motionless.

What man *among you* can deny this?

As a verb:

Many men *have been likened* to it, but few deserve the honor.

The car *was running away.*

As an adverb:

He paused *for an instant.*

During the whole time, Rip and his companion had labored on *in silence.*

Phrases are also used independently, as in the nominative absolute construction:

The specified time having elapsed, we set out for home;

as in parenthetical constructions:

This, *to be sure,* was but a poor excuse.

My sister, *at all events,* was out of danger;

as in an exclamatory nominative, with a modifier:

Poor boy! We could do nothing for him.

Clauses.—A *Clause* is a group of related words containing a subject and a predicate. There are three principal kinds of clauses: the *independent,* the *principal,* and the *subordinate.*

The independent clause need not detain us here; it exists in sentences—called *Compound Sentences*—where the writer wishes to express two or more thoughts so closely related and of such equal importance that he can connect them with the coördinating conjunctions—*and, but, or, therefore, however, nevertheless,* and the like. The conjunction may even be omitted, the two statements being paired in such an obvious relationship that no connective is needed. No real structural difficulties are involved; the main thing for the writer to bear in mind in writing compound sentences is that the two or more thoughts expressed shall be of equal rank. Examples are:

You will always be fools, and we shall never be gentlemen.

The husband who thoroughly loses his temper with his wife at the breakfast table busies himself all day long recollecting and amassing all the grievances that he has felt against her during the last ten years; and he returns at night in a sullen rage, and with an almost superhuman insight into the deficiencies in his helpmate.

—Stuart P. Sherman, *Points of View.*

The two Athenian ladies had moist eyes; the Russian mother, in that solemn moment, was straining the little Olga to her breast.

—De Amicis, *Constantinople.*

Principal and *subordinate* (or dependent) clauses occur in *Complex Sentences.* They exist in such close connection that one cannot be considered without the other. A clause can be mentioned as *principal* only with reference to another clause bearing a subordinate (or dependent) re-

lationship to it. Like the phrase, the subordinate clause always serves as one word in the sentence,—in fact, as one word in the principal clause; it may be used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb. Thus a subordinate clause may be used as a substantive:

And then I knew that *I would see the East first as commander of a small boat.* (Conrad, *Youth*)

Well, *what I mean by Education* is learning the rules of this mighty game. (Huxley)

These sentences are complex: the clause, *I would see the East first as commander of a small boat,* in the first sentence, is a noun clause used as object of the verb *knew;* in the second sentence the noun clause is used as subject of the verb *is learning.*

The subordinate clause may be used as an adjective:

There is no nation, so far as I am aware, *in which all the educated citizens use precisely the same speech.* (F. N. Scott)

They were all melancholy old creatures, *who had been unfortunate in life, and whose greatest misfortune it was that they were not long ago in their graves.*

The italicized parts of these sentences represent *Adjective Clauses,* each used as a modifier of a noun. Each of these clauses is also a *relative clause*—so named because it is introduced by a relative pronoun. The last adjective clause happens to contain a noun clause—*that they were not long ago in their graves*—used as a single word, as the true subject in apposition with *it.*

The subordinate clause may be used as an adverb:

While I stood gazing at Scutari, my friend touched me with his elbow to signify his discovery of another city. (De Amicis)

If the college newspapers have suffered from too much restraint, the humorous publications have, *as it will appear,* suffered from too little. (E. C. Hopwood, *The Morals of College Journalism*)

In the first sentence *While I stood gazing at Scutari* is an adverb clause modifying the verb *touched;* in the second, the *if* clause and the *as* clause are used as adverbs modifying *have suffered.*

Subordinate clauses also occur in compound-complex sentences:

As for the widow Wycherly, tradition tells us *that she was a great beauty in her day;* but, for a long while past, she had lived in deep seclusion, on account of certain scandalous stories, *which had prejudiced the gentry of the town against her.* (Hawthorne)

The compound-complex sentence has at least two independent, coördinate clauses, of which one or more contains a subordinate clause. In the foregoing example there are two independent, two subordinate clauses. (In strict logic, the "independent" clause here becomes a principal clause.)

In the skillful handling of phrases and clauses, in ability to construct these *parts* of sentences into unified and effective patterned wholes, consists much of the real art of composition.

It will be readily seen that since phrases and clauses are but parts of sentences they cannot normally be made to stand for sentences, nor punctuated as such. An exception, of course, is the independent clause of a compound sentence, which can sometimes be set off as a simple sentence:

You will always be fools.
We shall never be gentlemen.

But even in such cases there is usually a loss. In this sentence, for instance, the peculiar shading of meaning intended in the original "You will always be fools, and we

shall never be gentlemen" quite disappears upon breaking it into two sentences.

There are a few other exceptions where a period or other terminal mark of punctuation may properly be used after a word, phrase, or clause:

(1) In an exclamatory construction; as, Look! an aëroplane!
(2) In writing heads or subheads in a topical outline
(3) In signatures and references
(4) In introductions to expository or narrative passages; thus,

> "And now to proceed with my story."
> "A few real words, however, in elucidation of my real meaning, which some of my friends have evinced a disposition to misrepresent." (Poe)

(5) In elliptical constructions

In ordinary prose a phrase or other element may sometimes take the place of a full predication, though it is understood that here the phrase is an elliptical predication,—that some obvious part of the grammatical pattern has been omitted to secure greater emphasis upon the part given.

> Cynical? Machiavellian? Certainly. But also—how bold—and how refreshingly novel! Here again we encounter a strain of original thinking which the world must take into account.

In full sentences we should have:

> Is this cynical? Is it Machiavellian? Certainly it is. But also—how bold—and how refreshingly novel it is!

It is apparent that the part omitted is almost unconsciously supplied by the reader.

Ellipsis is most frequent in dialogue:

"After blowing the candle out, did you go back to bed?"

"I had no time to go back. At the moment when I blew the candle out the sitting-room door opened, and I saw—"

"You saw?"

"*You.*"

"Dressed as usual?"

"No."

"In my night-gown?"

"In your night-gown—with your bedroom candle in your hand."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"Could you see my face?"

"Yes."

"Plainly?"

"Quite plainly. The candle in your hand showed it to me."

"Were my eyes open?"

"Yes."

"Did you notice anything strange in them? Anything like a fixed, vacant expression?"

"Nothing of the sort."

—Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone.*

The "Sentence Fragment."—The "sentence fragment," such as is used by some of our contemporary writers, demands a word just here. The sentence fragment is a word, phrase, or clause, punctuated as a complete sentence. It is not necessarily an elliptical sentence, for often no unexpressed part is implied. It is usually found in a laconic, exclamatory, or otherwise emphatic style. Writers who use it with judgment often find it a means to make ideas stand out in vivid, clear relief. It is not entirely new; one can find examples of it in such writers as George Eliot, Thackeray, and J. A. Symonds. Kipling and Wells were perhaps responsible for a more popular introduction of the device, and among certain classes of writers it is now very common. Examples of its use occur in the work of

so painstaking an artist as Katherine Mansfield, usually with good effect:

But now to resolve! And especially to keep in touch with life. With the sky, this moon, these cold candid peaks.

In the *Letters and Papers* of J. A. Symonds one finds this:

I wonder again and again why one gives one's brainwork to the world. It is a very odd impulse. No gain in money. Some loss in reputation. And yet one does it—in the dear hope, perhaps, of smiting a sympathetic being here or there. I lose health and strength so obviously by literature that the impulse in me is more unaccountable than it would be in a vigorous man.

The fragment is also successfully used in the following:

Sooner or later, in any case, his company would be sent up in the hills to fight. Bushes and vines lay all over those hills to entangle them, bushes and vines like masses of green hair. He thought he would suffocate without the little coolness that puffed in to the seaport from the sea. *War in tight, high, hot valleys in the heart of the island. Soldiers running back and forth, shooting in the sunlight. Somebody's blood, perhaps his own, soaking through a uniform like sweat, with sweat* . . . It was not the fear of death which overcame him when he thought of these things, but the fear of a loathsome disease—from time to time the fear of going mad. His mother had often said that the Towers were a nervous family. . . .

—Wescott, *The Grandmothers.*

A Parenthesis.—Let us who write and teach be frank with you students who read this book. Let us admit that the growing use of the sentence fragment presents one of our most difficult problems in instructing you in the principles of sentence structure. We have said that phrases and clauses are not properly punctuated as sentences. Yet the sentence fragment is either a phrase or clause so punctuated, and, as we have seen, it is often used with good effect. What are we going to say? Certainly not that the

sentence fragment is not and cannot be properly used—for practice leads, grammar follows.

A Bit of Advice.—But we can say this, that the effective use of the sentence fragment requires a skill which few amateur writers possess. It requires, too, a thorough knowledge of legitimate sentence structure. It is an easily abused device which may quickly descend to an offensive mannerism, and judicious writers make it the exception rather than the rule. To the young student of composition let us give this counsel: First, master the English sentence; learn the regular grammatical forms; when you can write these successfully, then, if you wish, experiment.

Improper and Ineffective Sentence Fragments.—How easy it is to fail when one deviates from the straight path of regular sentence structure may be seen by a glance at the following fragments from the themes of college students—not freshmen in this case, but sophomores. Note especially the badly jumbled structure of the last part of *a:*

a. Swithin, one of the brothers of Old Jolyon, was one of the minor characters in the story. A typical Forsyte in that he had the craving for property. A man of medium stature, stout, and had a face of very sharp features that revealed his firm and forceful make-up.

b. Walking up a narrow circular staircase at the end of which I was confronted by two adjacent doors.

c. Old and bent as he was—standing there in the glorious glow of the tropic moon.

d. I spent my vacation at a little village on the Menominee River. The Menominee River being the boundary line between Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

e. I found it a very interesting book. Being the story of a man whose conscience would not let him rest.

f. The most familiar type of athlete is the professional baseball player. There being very many in the United States.

In these cases, we do not have anything like the intelligently written sentence fragments of Symonds or Wescott; what we have, rather, is the *Period Fault*—a random, injudicious setting off of phrases or clauses or other fragments as sentences.

EXERCISES IN SENTENCES, PHRASES, AND CLAUSES

1. Study the following sentences. (a) Make a chart for each sentence, dividing it into subject and predicate. Make a similar chart for each clause in the sentence. Pick out all phrases and clauses and show how they are used.

After two years of training he went to sea, and, entering the regions so well known to his imagination, found them strangely barren of adventure. (Conrad)

The study of the influence of earth's surfaces upon life is the ample definition I find for geography. (H. S. Canby)

To be clever is not necessarily to be trivial. (Arthur Colton)

That Jesse James always had murder in his heart is evident. (Arthur Colton)

The truth is that the problems of teachers are not problems of pure science but problems of the spirit. (F. N. Scott)

I wish it were everywhere written, even in the souls of all our young American writers, that he who will not answer to the rudder shall answer to the rocks. (Sidney Lanier)

Stephen digested this remark, which hurt him. He saw that his suspicions had been fathomed, and this injured his opinion of his own diplomacy. (Galsworthy)

The ancient proverb which declares that love is blind is only a half truth: love is only blind of one eye. (Stuart P. Sherman)

For in the multitude of middle-aged men who go about their vocations in a daily course determined for them in the same way as the tie of their cravats, there is always a good number who once meant to shape their own deed and alter the world a little. (C. W. Eliot)

The important thing is not to know how to spell words, but how to *use* them; evidently this was not taught in the days when boys learned to spell 15,000 words but men only used 1,500. The way to learn to *use* words is to read some good literature often and carefully, intensively, not extensively. (Bertrand Russell)

But there remain the *intelligentsia,* the free spirits in the middle ground, who are neither as unæsthetic to ideas as are the plutocracy nor as much the slaves of emotion as are the proletariat. What actually reveals itself when this small brotherhood of the superior is carefully examined? What reveals itself, it seems to me, is a gigantic disappointment. (H. L. Mencken)

Democracy is only bearable when it is good-natured. (Struthers Burt)

Custom is the god all of us revere except a few who have come to see the casual way in which habits get formed, and the pertinacity with which they are transmitted from generation to generation. (James H. Robinson)

2. The same idea may often be expressed in a phrase or a clause, the writer selecting the construction which, from the standpoint

of euphony and adequacy of expression, is preferable. Which of the following alternative constructions would you choose, and why?

He begged to be permitted to go.
He begged that he be permitted to go.
He begged for permission to go.

Steele was the first man who arrived.
Steele was the first man to arrive.
Steele was the first man arriving.

On his return to England Goldsmith received the melancholy tidings of the death of his mother.

When he returned to England Goldsmith received the melancholy tidings that his mother was dead.

Looking more closely, Beaujolais was shocked to discover that the man was dead.

When he looked more closely, Beaujolais was shocked as he discovered the man to be dead.

Upon looking more closely, Beaujolais was shocked at the discovery that the man was dead.

3. Experiment with the following sentences, trying the effect of turning phrases into clauses, and clauses into phrases:

We go on a journey chiefly to be free of all impediments and of all inconveniences; to leave ourselves behind, much more to get rid of others.

Our food supply having become exhausted, we turned toward home.

It was a task demanding common sense and wisdom.

Suppose he had been perfectly certain that he would be killed.

The reader seeking only information will find a great deal of it in this book.

It was a sharp disappointment to President Wilson that Page should take such a stand.

It would be far better that we should fail than that we should do this man an injustice.

The habit of reading wisely is one of the most difficult habits one can acquire.

She read me gentle books to keep my mind from the war.

As I look back and think of those cataracts of printed stuff—I could almost reckon the printing press as among the scourges of mankind.

This shows how needful it is for us to understand each other.

4. Phrases of one type may often be replaced by those of another, without any appreciable change of meaning. Thus a writer may say: "To be clever is not necessarily to be trivial," or "Being clever is not necessarily being trivial"; "I fear there is no chance to find it," or "I fear there is no chance of finding it." But in most cases the writer uses the form that he instinctively, or otherwise, selects as best fitted to the demands of euphony and cadence, and the exact shade of meaning he desires.

Try substituting other phrases for those found in the following sentences. Criticise your results.

. . . as good almost (to) kill a good man as (to) kill a good book.

Amateur writers are usually working in the dark and need to be helped in finding themselves.

Learning to express oneself well means learning to think well and to remember well.

Just to see you is to begin to live once more.

The white men began trooping out at once.

It was time for dressing.

My friend is on the point of leaving me.

III

Word Forms—Inflections

Whenever a word changes its form to indicate a change in meaning or use it is said to be *inflected*. As compared with other languages, English is blessedly free from inflec-

tions. Yet we have certain definite and important modifications of form, corresponding to changes in meaning and use, that must be learned by any one who aspires to speak or write the language correctly.

Good grammar demands that the *forms* of words used in any given construction shall be such as have the sanction of good usage.

(1) a. Ferdinand *lies* there exhausted.
b. Ferdinand *lay* there exhausted for over an hour.
c. Ferdinand *has lain* there exhausted (ever since the fight).

(2) a. The man *takes* off his pack and wearily *lays* it on the floor.
b. The man *took* off his pack and wearily *laid* it on the floor.
c. The man *has taken* off his pack and *has* wearily *laid* it on the floor.

(3) a. The sergeant *ordered* Charley and *me* to stand guard.
b. Charley and *I were ordered* by the sergeant to stand guard.

(4) a. Give this to *whomever* you will.
b. Give this to *whoever* pleases you most.

(5) a. That was a *good* summer for *us*.
b. That was a *better* summer for *us*.
c. That was *our best* summer.

The foregoing sentences illustrate the operation of the principle of inflection in English. In the first two groups, the changed form of the verb denotes in each instance a change in meaning; the use remains the same. This is also the case with the forms *good, better, best,* in Number 5. But in Numbers 3 and 4, it is not a change in meaning, but a change in function that calls for different form. Thus, in 3, *Charley and me* means the same as *Charley and I,* but a shift from object of a verb to subject requires a change from the objective form *me* to the nominative form *I*. Likewise with the verb: a shift from the active to the passive demands a new form—*were ordered*. In 4 and 5, the

changes from *whomever* to *whoever* and from the objective *us* to the possessive *our* occur for a similar reason—the function of the word in the sentence has been changed.

As has been said, such forms should be thoroughly mastered by every young writer. It would seem to be the only way to guard oneself against certain curious illogical practices which have a tendency to creep into our speech. Thus we want to say, "It is *me*," but, "She invited Charley and *I* to the party." While common practice and common consent may some day approve such forms as *Who do you want* and *It is me*, these forms are not yet widely accepted by careful speakers, and are frowned upon by writers. At present they are characteristic of uncultivated speech, or, at most, of informal cultivated speech. They should be avoided in writing.

Doubtless one could learn to speak correctly merely from imitating good models—provided he were not distracted by many bad models. However, language is worth study and should be raised from the plane of imitation and habit to the plane of intelligence. In a rational way, faulty habits should be recognized and broken down; correct habits of usage should then be established. The parts of speech and their functions must be known. It is especially necessary to know the forms of verbs. Such confusing verbs as *lie* and *lay*, *sit* and *set* should be learned; homonyms such as *there, their; to, too, two; its* and *it's* should be well fixed in mind.

Grammatical Agreement.—An important factor in sentence construction is the grammatical agreement of parts. This is in some respects a matter of arbitrary convention; but it is more directly related to logical habits of thought. Failure to make verbs agree with their subjects, or pronouns with their antecedents, may not always cause one to be misunderstood, but it is sure to mark lack of careful training—is, at least, a sign of slovenly mental habits. In effect, it is a little like eating at table with one's knife.

The following sentences illustrate the principle of grammatical agreement:

Verbs with subjects:

1. Both the pilot and his passenger *were* killed.
2. Neither the sergeant nor his assistant *was* at the desk.
3. Neither the President nor his Cabinet members *favor* this bill.
4. He *doesn't* (does not) look ill.
5. Blood, suffering, and sorrow *are* the price of war. (But "The price of war *is* blood, suffering, and sorrow.")
6. The concession *was* forty thousand crowns.
7. Almost none *were* left to tell the tale.
8. None but the brave *deserves* the fair.
9. I who *am* your friend request this.
10. A number of students *were* waiting at the station.
11. The number of students here *is* small.
12. Bob, as well as Mary and Tom, *was* there to meet me.
13. The book, along with several others, *was* lying on my table.

Pronouns with antecedents:

1. Has every *one* handed in *his* paper?
2. *He* doesn't go out of *his* way to help any *one* who can help *himself*.
3. If *anybody* knows a better way, we should like to hear from *him*.

Pronominal adjectives with substantives:

1. Do you like *this kind* of apples?
2. Can you have *these* two *pairs* of shoes ready by tomorrow night?

Agreement of tenses:

One who *became* overbearingly superior and consequently *was ousted* from his position *is* spoken of as "unable to stand prosperity."

A sentence like the above which refers to things taking place at different times must make the relationship of the tenses clear. When the main predication is in the present,

any action referred to as previously complete should be in the present-perfect tense. The sentence should read:

One who *has become* overbearingly superior and consequently *has been* ousted from his position *is* spoken of as unable to stand prosperity.

Or, if the main predication is in the past tense, the dependent predications should be in the past-perfect tense:

Those who *had earned* the right to go with the team *were* at the station at the appointed time.

A logical sequence of tenses in sentences following each other is quite as important as internal consistency. Tenses must not be changed without reason. One would therefore not write:

I feel as I read this book that the author is making too much use of the startling and ugly. He seemed to overemphasize the bad and ignore the good;

but would write rather:

I feel as I read this book that the author makes too much use of the startling and ugly. He seems to overemphasize the bad and ignore the good.

IV

Logical Grammatical Relationships

Good grammar is largely a matter of good logic; often the surest test for grammatical accuracy is an application of the rules of common sense. In the constructions treated in the present section, violation of good grammar is in each case synonymous with violations of logical consistency.

Relationship of Phrase Modifiers.—Phrase modifiers should be of such nature and so placed that there can be no doubt as to the meaning intended. Participial and

gerund phrases deserve special study. Such phrases used as modifiers must have some word or construction to modify; otherwise they are left hanging with nothing to attach themselves to, or, if attached, they make a ludicrous meaning. Thus a young man writes, amusingly enough,

After riding five miles, the road made a sudden turn.

This kind of construction is called a *Dangling Modifier*. It is a very common error, and even the more experienced writers sometimes fall into the trap. In Mungo Park's account of his African explorations, for example, one finds this sentence relative to a marauding lion:

By continuing his depredations, the people were so much enraged that a party of them resolved to go and hunt the monster.

The point, of course, is that writers using this construction do not say what they mean. Not a road, but people ride; "After *we* had ridden five miles, the road made a sudden turn," makes sense. And so in the second, not the people but the lion had continued his depredations, though the construction of Park's sentence would plainly imply that the people were guilty.

What seems to be an exception to the above rule occurs in a sentence where a general action is named and we do not associate the action with any particular person:

In paddling a canoe the muscles of the back have to bear most of the strain.

In dancing the Charleston the knees are slightly bent and the toes are turned in.

But this is only apparent, for in both cases the phrases have a definite grammatical structure; they modify not a single word, but the whole statement which follows.

A similar faulty construction is the *Squinting Modifier*. Here the modifying element is of such nature and is so placed that the reader is unable to tell where it belongs.

Aside from being a stupid husband like you he's a good fellow.

This sentence has two equally probable meanings. Pause after "husband," and note the effect. Then read the sentence with the pause coming after "you." Note also the following sentence:

It is said that he was without a rival in interpreting the French spirit during the past fifty years.

The writer means of course that for fifty years Anatole France has been the chief interpreter of the French spirit. What he says, however, is quite different. Yet by a simple shift of the phrase *during the past fifty years* the trouble is corrected.

Congruity of Elements.—The different parts of a sentence must be so constructed and phrased that all the elements are in congruity with the general pattern. Violations of this principle often take the form of incomplete and illogical comparisons.

There are at this academy setting-up exercises and drill similar to military schools.

It seems that Galsworthy, like Shaw, speaks his beliefs through his character Jones.

Exercises and drill cannot be compared with military schools. We can only compare the exercises and drills of one school with the exercises and drills of another school. Galsworthy, like Shaw, speaks through his characters, but Shaw cannot speak through Galsworthy's character, Jones.

A type of incongruity occurs in sentences containing a pronoun of vague or impossible reference.

As to the style of the writing, I would say that it is very similar to the manner in which he talks.

Here *he* can logically refer to nothing in the sentence, though grammatically the reference is to *the style of writ-*

ing. The basic fault in the incongruous construction is that the sentence starts out to be one thing, from the point of view of form, and turns out to be another. The result is a mixed or distorted sentence pattern, whose meaning is often difficult to disengage. An extreme case of incongruity of pattern occurs in the following strung-out sentence, in which the author gets quite lost in the mazes of his material:

When Bill pictured himself sitting in the middle of the road with his hands above his head and the fellow going through his pockets, of how he would probably have to walk home—a couple of miles yet—for the man would, without doubt, take the car, too, of how he would look when he walked in the door, how his wife and children would look at him in amazement, and crowd around him as he told them about it, how they would miss the car on Sundays—in fact, they had planned to drive over to mother's next day, and how hard it would be for him to get another car,—in fact, he owed a little on this one yet and he would have to give up his job in town, since he could not get back and forth on schedule anymore, how his family would suffer as a result, for he could not do well enough on the farm to take care of them as he should,—well, with all these thoughts chasing each other through his head he simply made up his mind he would not lay down easy. He grit his teeth and felt savage. Another bump tossed them together again. He withdrew. The other man did the same.

Such a sentence violates all principles of unified and coherent structure. It seems too bad to have been actually written. (Though as a matter of fact it occurred in the paper of a man who has sold several stories.) It has many faults, but its basic sin is incongruity of sentence pattern.

Contrast the formlessness of the preceding sentence with the relative firmness and consistency in pattern of the following:

When he ventured on the following day, finding her a little better humoured, to expostulate with her on her coldness of yesterday, she

confessed, with her usual frankness, that she had no sort of dislike to his attentions; that she could even endure some high-flown compliments; that a young woman placed in her situation had a right to expect all sort of civil things said to her; that she hoped she could digest a dose of adulation, short of insincerity, with as little injury to her humility as most young women: but that—a little before he had commenced his compliments—she had overheard him by accident, in rather rough language, rating a young woman, who had not brought home his cravats quite to the appointed time, and she thought to herself, "As I am Miss Susan Winstanley, and a young lady—a reputed beauty, and known to be a fortune,—I can have my choice of the finest speeches from the mouth of this very fine gentleman who is courting me—but if I had been poor Mary Such-a-one (*naming the milliner*),—and had failed of bringing home the cravats to the appointed hour—though perhaps I had sat up half the night to forward them—what sort of compliments should I have received then?"

—CHARLES LAMB, *Modern Gallantry.*

Parallelism Within the Sentence.—One of the most frequent violations of logic in the sentences of untrained and careless writers is faulty parallel structure. It is merely a matter of good sense that ideas which are so closely related and are of such equal rank as to be connected by *and, or, but,* or other coördinating conjunctions, should be put into similar structure. Thus, when a student writes, "They spent most of their time outdoors wrestling, running, and all other forms of sport," he shows himself inattentive to simple logic. *Wrestling* and *running* are participial in form and demand a correlative of like nature, such as *swimming,* and *playing* ball. To use another construction here is to destroy the sentence pattern, with æsthetic results precisely similar to those which would follow the distortion of a design in painting or architecture.

A particularly objectionable form of illogical parallelism is to be found in the so-called *and who* and *and which* construction. This is an attempt to make a relative adjec-

tive clause coördinate with some word or phrase, as in this sentence, "The story is about a murderer with a conscience that bothers him and who gives himself up to the police." Obviously *with a conscience that bothers him* is not of the same pattern as *who gives himself up to the police.* A logical design is restored by amending the sentence to read, "The story is about a murderer whose conscience bothers him, and who later gives himself up to the police." An extreme instance of incorrect parallelism is to be found in a construction where logical pattern is wrenched to such a point that material which belongs in one sentence is put into another, as in the following: "The inability to be happy comes, generally, from two causes: lack of imagination. The grim curse of poverty is the other cause."

This sentence can be amended only by rewriting,

The inability to be happy comes, generally, from two causes: lack of imagination, and the grim curse of poverty.

The following sentence illustrates correct parallelism:

The traveler put his horse into a quick trot up the village, but when he approached the Green, the *beauty* of the view that lay on his right hand, the singular *contrast* presented by the groups of villagers with the knot of Methodists near the maple, and, perhaps, yet more, *curiosity* to see the young female preacher, proved too much for his anxiety to get to the end of his journey, and he paused.

—George Eliot, *Adam Bede.*

Beauty, contrast, and *curiosity* are parallel in idea; hence they are parallel in form.

Subordination and Coördination.—In constructing sentences containing two or more elements of unequal rank, it is necessary to show by the construction which one is principal, which subordinate. The object of a writer

should always be to convey his ideas with exactitude. Only the sloven and the bungler throws his ideas out in the gross, with nothing to indicate the fine shadings of meanings he has in mind. Precise relationships in thought within the sentence can be shown in no better way than through care in putting ideas of equal rank in coördinate constructions, main ideas in principal, secondary and modifying ideas in subordinate constructions.

Faulty coördination and subordination are so common with young writers and do so much to weaken and vitiate style that the subject is worthy of a detailed treatment unfortunately not possible in the limited space of this text. A few comments must suffice. A common mistake is to connect a principal with a subordinate clause by *and* or *but*. Thus a student writes:

The story is about a young seaman, and he lived in a house that was reputed to be haunted.

Plainly the second clause in this sentence is subordinate, simply adding a detail about the seaman. Replace *and he* by *who* and the sentence reads logically:

The story is about a young seaman, who lived in a house which was reputed to be haunted.

Young children usually notice and remark upon one thing at a time:

There is a man. He has a big nose. He is digging a ditch.

Very early one's sense of value tells him that these statements are not of equal importance. They do not deserve equal space. The first, we quickly perceive, is of little value; the second is of less value than the third. There can be no coördination of the last two predications, so we must make the second predication subordinate. The first we telescope with the other two:

A man *who has a big nose* is digging a ditch. This still sounds a bit childish, so we shall reduce the bulk and consequent importance of the adjective clause, making it a prepositional phrase:

A man *with a big nose* is digging a ditch.

If one does not object to compound adjectives he may write:

The *big-nosed* man is digging a ditch.

These sentences represent *degrees* of subordination. We may start with several simple statements about a certain subject. To make the central predication stand out and to reduce the other predications, not only in logical importance, but often in bulk, we subordinate them as far as seems necessary or just. As in the above instance we may end with one predication which contains the material at first contained in two or three sentences. Often we end with a complex sentence, containing one principal predication and one or more dependent clauses. Thus, in the following:

I went home, and my family decided soon afterwards that I should attend a military camp for the rest of the summer.

By reducing an obviously subordinate idea to a modifying clause of time, the sentence is made to read:

Soon after I went home, my family decided that I should attend a military camp for the rest of the summer.

The sentence at once gains in emphasis and general firmness of structure.

Such a shift of a subordinate idea to a subordinate position, or of a main idea to a principal position, inevitably results in a more effective sentence. Note the following:

Five days later, Johnny Frazer sat stiff and cold beside the driver of a canvas-covered travelling wagon, and crawled along the sandy post road to White Haven.

Five days later Johnny Frazer, *sitting stiff and cold beside the driver of a canvas-covered traveling wagon,* crawled along the sandy post road to White Haven. (James Boyd)

Such reconstructions are often necessary to avoid ambiguity. This sentence of doubtful meaning,

He was a gentleman, and I disliked him.

immediately becomes clear when written,

Although I disliked him, he was a gentleman.

In writing longer sentences, especially, there must be a careful weighing of the predications to determine which are main and which are subordinate. Long sentences which are stringy and lacking in unity gain no force from their length. The involved sentence often loses in clearness, and a loss of clearness always means a loss of force. Instead of trying to make one complex structure which shall impress the reader by its mass, it would be better to break the complexity into simpler and shorter sentences. If special emphasis is desired, perhaps it can be secured by the use of inversion, or by the use of the periodic or the balanced structure.

EXERCISES IN COÖRDINATION AND SUBORDINATION

1. Combine the ideas in each of the following groups into a coherent sentence, with special attention to proper subordination and coördination:

A. 1. One of the daughters of this noted Elizabeth Evans lives at Sheffield.
2. She preserves the Quaker bonnet, the white net cap, and the spun silk shawl worn by Dinah Morris.
3. She preserves these with great care.
4. Dinah Morris wore these when she went preaching.

B. 1. He had walked down Bird Cage Walk, down the Mall.
2. Chairs and lights denoted that London fashion was again bestirring.
3. It was bestirring in its futile quest.
4. He walked down the Strand.
5. Vans, hucksters' carts, and bustling citizens here bespoke a life, vulgar and pushing.
6. Yet it was a life at least intelligible.
7. He found his old resting place on the wooden wall by London River.

2. Contrast the sentences in the following groups for effectiveness:

A. 1. He never lived to be anything but a young writer himself, as he lacked four months of being twenty-nine when he died.
2. As he lacked four months of being twenty-nine when he died, he never lived to be anything but a young writer himself.

B. 1. The marriage was a perfect one, and it was attended by many sorrows.
2. The marriage was a perfect one, although it was attended by many sorrows.
3. The marriage was a perfect one, but it was attended by many sorrows.

3. (a) Study the sentences in the exercises, pages 164-166, for effective coördination and subordination.

(b) Study the sentences in the exercises under Comeliness for the same purpose.

4. Right connectives are all-important in proper coördination and subordination. Note the remarkable transformation of meaning accompanying a change in the connective in the following:

> "She does not deserve to be rescued," said the philosopher, "but I will rescue her. Indeed," he thought a moment later, "she does not want to be rescued, and, *therefore,* I will rescue her." (James Stephens)

NOTE: The *therefore* here is in effect a part of the connective. In fact, the *and* could be left out without affecting the meaning.

V

Effective Sentence Patterns

The preceding sections have been devoted chiefly to the grammar of the sentence, and, as we have said, grammar is largely concerned with two things; first, that a given group of words shall make sense; second, that these words shall be combined according to the sanction of good use. He who has learned the grammar of the sentence has laid a foundation for good writing,—a very necessary one, too; but, after all, it is only a foundation, and should be understood as such. There remains to be considered the question of effectiveness, or what may be called with fair accuracy, the *rhetoric* of the sentence. The questions now to be asked are, How can we economize the reader's effort? How impress upon him the ideas which we think most important? How interest and move and please him, at the same time that we say exactly what we want to say in the way we want to say it? These questions can best be answered, in a way of some practical value to the student at least, not by propounding rules, but by reference to the works of the masters of the English sentence and a study of their practice. The following pages, then, are devoted to a consideration of the effective sentence as it has been used by our best writers. Such a treatment cannot of course be exhaustive; centuries of experiment and adaptation in an effort to make the sentence meet all needs have left it almost as varied and diverse as life itself. Our discussion will therefore aim to be suggestive rather than complete.

It may be said at the outset that though we are not in this section going to be concerned with rules but rather with the application of rules, the effective sentence, like

any other unit of writing, will be found to conform to certain rather definite principles: it is unified and coherent, it obeys laws of variety and emphasis, it is clear, and it is beautiful.

Some one has well said that it is not enough for a sentence to be so constructed that it can be understood; it should be so constructed that *it cannot be misunderstood.* This means, of course, that a good sentence is written with consideration for the reader; its thought is put into a form as easy to grasp as possible. Words and phrases are placed judiciously, those deserving most attention being placed where they will attract the most notice; important ideas are given more space or are put into principal constructions, lesser ideas are shown to be subordinate; and, in general, the significant in the sentence is made to stand out so that the reader cannot miss it.

The reader expects a sentence to be the statement of a single but well rounded-out idea, or of two or more ideas so closely related that they logically belong together. He is annoyed to find either too great complexity of thought or too much intricacy of structure. If the basic thought needs amplification or much modification, he will expect us to develop a paragraph. When a sentence contains more than one predication he expects us to join only those ideas which are closely related to each other, and to subordinate the lesser ideas so that their relation to the main thought can be gotten at the first reading.

The reader expects these things, not because he is such a keen critic of style, but because his mind works in an orderly way, according to psychological laws, and because he is constitutionally opposed to needless effort. The mind naturally grasps at wholes, whose parts not only have a clear relationship to each other, but *are easily seen* to have such a relationship. The good sentence will, therefore, be *organic;* it will be built according to some design,

will have a pattern, will be so planned and executed that every part shall contribute to the desired effect. It will contain enough material, but not too much, for completeness.

The structure of such a sentence is internally consistent: ideas alike in meaning are put into like forms; there are no incongruities in pattern; a design once started is carried through to the end; the whole is constructed according to psychological laws of attention and association, to principles of logic and common sense.

The effective sentence has within it power to move us. When Stephen Crane says that "The guns squatted in a row like savage chiefs. They argued with abrupt violence," he is not only using words that give us clear images and meanings, but he impresses the ideas upon us because he is so clear and so brief. Ideas that are clear can be transferred to our consciousness without effort on our part. Ideas which are forceful often speak like Crane's savage chiefs—with abrupt violence. Where there is force there is evident power, and the power frequently produces mental shock. It is not, of course, desirable that all sentences should possess just this kind of force; but all should be so built, letter by letter and word by word, as to arouse interest and pleasure. They should be euphonious, rhythmic, symmetrical; should strike the reader as an answer to his silent demand for the pleasantly varied, the harmonious, the appropriate; in other words, they should possess the element of beauty.

Length of Sentences.—All sentences are either long or short. The question may well be asked, How long should a sentence be? It has been said that a good sentence contains enough, but not too much material to be complete.[1]

[1] It is true that in the English language, the tendency has been toward a shorter sentence, as certain research studies at the University of Nebraska have proved, and one's own reading would corroborate. But there are still many long sentences.

The length of a sentence, then, should depend first of all upon how much material the writer needs to round out his thought. It should depend in part, too, upon the effects he wishes to produce. Length of sentence does not necessarily determine the tempo or other stylistic qualities of a prose style, yet the longer sentence will be found more frequently, perhaps, in the slower-moving styles, such as philosophical discussion and leisurely description; and the shorter sentence seems to belong more habitually to a more rapid movement, to the laconic, the nervous, the energetic, the graphic.

Yet very sprightly and vivid effects may be found in writing that contains many long sentences. To use examples quite widely separated in point of time, one may cite Hazlitt's style as notable for its energy and brilliance and vivacity, and H. L. Mencken's prose as especially pointed and vigorous: both, however, often employ relatively long sentences without materially altering their stylistic effects. The chief argument against long sentences for amateurs is their difficulty. The unpracticed writer gets lost in his own mazes, and his reader becomes completely bewildered in his attempts to follow.

One of the most irritating of all types of bad writing occurs in what may be aptly called the *cluttered sentence*. This is a sentence that contains too much, or because of illogical arrangement of its parts seems to contain too much. The result is confusion and irritation in the mind of the reader. The strung-out "sentence" from a student's theme quoted on page 174 furnishes an example. Such writing as this has more faults than can be designated in one word, but perhaps the most inclusive term is our word *cluttered*—*stringy* and *straggling* are also used to describe such constructions. Yet this extract is not objectionable because it is long, but rather because it is badly written, because the writer has used poor judgment in selecting and organizing his material and so has composed an incoherent

sentence. The following sentences are relatively long, but in each case the author has made use of a single basic idea, has been able to manage his material in such a way as neither to fatigue nor distract the reader's attention:

Philip had no sympathy with the individualism that had fastened upon the art and intellect of Greece but had at the same time disintegrated her social order; in all these little capitals he saw not the exhilarating culture and the unsurpassable art, but the commercial corruption and the political chaos; he saw insatiable merchants and bankers absorbing the vital resources of the nation, incompetent politicians and clever orators misleading a busy populace into disastrous plots and wars, factions cleaving classes and classes congealing into castes: this, said Philip, was not a nation but only a welter of individuals—geniuses and slaves; he would bring the hand of order down upon this turmoil, and make all Greece stand up united and strong as the political center and basis of the world.

—Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy.*

Pen trolled over some verses he had been making that morning, in which he informed himself that the woman who had slighted his passion could not be worthy to win it: that he was awaking from love's mad fever, and, of course, under these circumstances, proceeded to leave her, and to quit a heartless deceiver: that a name which had one day been famous in the land, might again be heard in it: and, that though he never should be the happy and careless boy he was but a few months since, or his heart be what it had been ere passion had filled it and grief had well-nigh killed it; that though to him personally death was as welcome as life, and that he would not hesitate to part with the latter, but for the love of one kind being whose happiness depended on his own,—yet he hoped to show he was a man worthy of his race, and that one day the false one should be brought to know how great was the treasure and noble the heart which she had flung away.

—Thackeray, *Pendennis.*

Perhaps when all is said, the best advice to give to a student about long and short sentences is this: write the kind

of sentence you need to write to express what you have to say in the way it should be said; all things considered, you should probably write more short sentences than long ones, especially until you find yourself developing power to handle the larger units. It should be remembered that it takes more skill to write a long sentence than a short one. A large pattern, with its necessarily large number of subordinate elements, is naturally more difficult to hold in mind, more likely to slip out of control, than the smaller one. It is true that in the hands of a competent writer the long sentence may, from the point of view both of unity and of success, be as satisfactory as the brief one. But the average young writer is not yet competent; for him the advice of Anatole France is probably the best possible: "Whenever you can shorten a sentence, do."

In the following extract, the sentences are prevailingly short. Study it for effects.

. . . Infant psychology was neglected in the past; indeed, the intellectualist methods in vogue made it almost impossible. Take such a matter as sleep. All mothers wish their children to sleep, because it is both healthy and convenient when they do. They had developed a certain technique; rocking the cradle and singing lullabies. It was left for males who investigated the matter scientifically to discover that this technique is ideally wrong, for though it is likely to succeed on any given day, it creates bad habits. Every child loves to be made a fuss of, because its sense of self-importance is gratified. If it finds that by not sleeping it secures attention, it will soon learn to adopt this method. The result is equally damaging to health and character. The great thing here is the formation of habit: the association of the cot with sleep. If this association has been adequately produced, the child will not lie awake unless it is ill or in pain. But the production of the association requires a certain amount of discipline; it is not to be achieved by mere indulgence, because that causes pleasurable associations with lying awake.

—Bertrand Russell, *Education and the Good Life.*

Special Functions of the Short Sentence.—The short sentence is especially fitted for the expression of ideas in a concise, pointed, and sparkling form. Our literature is filled with little word gems dropped from the pens of brilliant and ready writers, which fairly scintillate with the bright light of truth or the harder glint of cold wit. Types of such sentences have been given special names.

1. *The Epigram.* "An epigram," says Arlo Bates, "is a notion rounded like a snowball for throwing"; and in his definition he illustrates what he defines. The epigram is terse, neat, often startling. Chesterton, Shaw, Oscar Wilde, are some notable English epigrammatists. "Life is a bad quarter-of-an-hour made up of exquisite moments," declares Wilde.

2. *The Proverb.* "Two may keep counsel if one be away," wrote Lyly in his *Euphues*. The Arabs say, "A man should not sleep on silk until he has walked on sand." These are examples of the proverb. The proverb is as old as literature itself. It is the concise expression of some bit of crystallized wisdom, homely, worldly, and often grimly witty. "Let sleeping dogs lie," is a proverb evolved from much bitter racial experience; and "He who first comes to the mill, first grinds" contains in epitome the whole doctrine of expediency. "A stitch in time saves nine," sounds housewifely, but it has universal application. Old and homely as they are, proverbs have yet a use in the most modern writing. Galsworthy, for instance, thought by many to be our greatest contemporary novelist, frequently employs proverbial material. In his *Forsyte Saga* one finds such sentences and phrases as, "She has made her bed, she must lie in it." "Let the dead past bury its dead." "Nothing venture—" "Wishes father thoughts." "Let sleeping dogs lie." "Victory in defeat."

3. *Aphorisms.* The aphorism, like the epigram and the proverb, is a condensed statement of truth. It is perhaps less homely, more dignified, more poetic than the proverb.

In Spenser's *Faerie Queene* one finds many aphorisms, such as,

> . . . oft fire is without smoke
> And peril without show.

and

> Untroubled night, they say, gives counsel best.

Francis Bacon's writings are full of aphorisms.

4. *The Mot.* The *bon mot* the French call it, the "good word," is a thing well said, and, in its present connotation, cleverly, wittily said. A recent example of the *mot* is to be found in Walter Raleigh's *Letters,* where, commenting on the uncertainty of immortality in literature, he remarks, "You can't tell whether an author is alive until he's dead." Closely related to this kind of sentence is that in which there is a clever or startling turn of thought, like this one in Willa Cather's *The Professor's House:* "She was less intelligent and more sensible than he had thought." This is very near a paradox, but is yet not quite the same. There is perhaps no necessary relationship between intelligence and natural common sense.

5. *Epigrammatic Sentences and "Quotations."* Sentences that have the hard-biting, terse quality of epigram or proverb or aphorism, or the clever brightness of the *mot,* but for some reason—either in general application, or in adoption as the accepted wisdom of a people—have not been graduated into one of these classes, may be characterized as epigrammatic, or, if taken up and repeated often enough, as "quotations."

Latin literature is full of such sentences—*sententia* the ancients called them; when overused, as they were likely to be, they came to be known as "conceits." As such Quintilian condemns them. But used naturally, as in

Horace, for instance, they strengthen and invigorate a style. In Horace we find,

Of writing well, right thinking is the beginning and the fount.

Keep your poem nine years before publishing.

But he that joins instructions with delight, profit with pleasure, carries all the votes.

"Who steals my purse steals trash," is one of the multitude of Shakespearean "sentences." Others are:

Life is a stage and all the men and women merely players.

Those friends thou hast and their adoption tried
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.

And here are two familiar ones from Francis Bacon:

There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious.

The vices of authority are chiefly four: delays, corruption, roughness, and facility.

Recent examples are numerous:

Fun is the great antidote to poison of the emotions. (Raleigh)

Free education should be reserved for those who have the mind and the will to receive it. (David Starr Jordan)

Any one who has anything to say cannot fail to be understood. (Raleigh)

Folk Sayings.—Closely related to the proverb from the point of view of effect and origin are quotable, usually poetic and metaphoric, folk expressions. Celtic and Anglo-Saxon native speech is particularly rich in this sort of thing. Of some untoward happening in an otherwise pleasant event the Irish say, "That takes the gilt off the

gingerbread." It is a tendency to such natural poetry that makes Irish conversation so delightfully piquant.

It is not strange that observant and sensitive writers frequently borrow these expressive phrases for literary purposes. In *The Divided Horsecloth,* an early French story, there is an example of homely simile that is delightful. A rich merchant has given all his property to his ungrateful son, and stands "naked as a peeled wand before the whole world." Chaucer's tales are studded with expressive folk metaphor. The Wife of Bath picturesquely describes the punishment she meted out to her unfaithful husband: "for anger and for very jealousy," she says, "I made him fry in his own grease." And in the same tale we find the narrator telling how her victim wriggled "when his shoe pinched," and how an old lady declared to her knight husband that his arrogance is "not worth a hen." Hardy uses many such expressions in his *Wessex Tales.* And Galsworthy, again, is full of them. "The fat is in the fire," he says. Also, "Did she put her foot into it?" "He was pale as a sheet"; "thick enough skin"; "cooked her own goose"; "sponge on us"; "turned a hair"; "the family bolt was shot." A striking example of folk sayings occurs in Turgenev's *The Country House.* "They've let the goat loose in the kitchen garden (you may say)." The process of the evolution of such vivid expressions is going on constantly, perhaps nowhere more rapidly than in America. It is the answer language has to make to our demand for a crystallized, artistic verbalization of life's more meaningful experiences.

VI

Arrangement—Order of Elements

The order in which ideas are placed has much to do with the effectiveness of the sentence. Order very largely de-

termines such important matters as emphasis, cadence and euphony, ease and lucidity; in fact, much of the general success of the sentence depends upon the intelligent arrangement of its elements.

"Beautiful words are the light of thought," once wrote the Greek rhetorician, Longinus. But Thomas Hobbes, the hard-headed Englishman, saw that this was only a half truth. Beautiful words alone do not make thought; it is the combination of the right words into patterns of ideas that matters.

> For the order of words, when placed as they ought to be, carries a light before it, as a torch in the night shows a man the stops and unevenness of his way. . . . But when [words are] placed unnaturally, the reader will often find unexpected checks, and be forced to go back and hunt for the sense, and suffer such unease as in a coach a man unexpectedly finds in passing a furrow.
>
> —*Virtues of an Heroic Poem.*

This expresses an important principle. In a sentence badly arranged, all the ideas the writer intends may be contained therein; yet for the reader the going will be so dark, rough, and uncomfortable that he will either give up in disgust or will plow through in resentment and disdain. There can be no effectiveness, no beauty, in words used in ill-assorted relationships.

General Design—Loose and Periodic Sentences.—From the point of view of general design, just as all sentences are either long or short, so all sentences are either periodic or loose. The periodic is a close-knit structure in which all modifying elements are introduced preceding completion of the main idea; the loose is, as the name implies, a more comfortably built structure, with additions after the principal, or at least a self-sustaining, idea is expressed.

The following sentences are periodic:

> To begin with, the idea of leaving the house empty seemed to Constance a mad idea. (Bennett)

The house had never been left empty.

Taking place in the open air, on the sunny slope of a hill, valley and plain or islanded sea stretching away below to meet the blazing blue of a cloudless sky, the moving pageant, thus from the first set in tune with nature, brought to a focus of splendour the rays of every separate art. More akin to an opera than to a play it had, as its basis, music. (G. Lowes Dickinson)

These sentences are loose:

The news escaped from the sick room that Camilla had become ludicrous in homeliness, and the cup of the envious overflowed. (Wilder)

If he stayed for three years, he would never come back; that was a certainty. (Bennett)

The envoy begs leave, later in the year, to visit his friend, the Count de Thun, whose acquaintance he made in Amsterdam, and who is now in Munich, but permission is refused. (Gosse)

As may be readily seen, none of the first sentences will bear the insertion of a period before the end is reached; but in the second group, periods may in each case be inserted, sometimes at two or three points, and the sentence still make sense.

Some sentences are what we may call semi-periodic. For example, if we change the first sentence given above, thus,

To begin with, the idea of leaving the house empty seemed a mad idea to Constance.

a period might be placed after *mad idea,* and there would still be meaning. But it would not be so exact as the writer intended it. The loose sentence often performs the function of adding just the specific effect the writer desires. This is true even in compound sentences, which, incidentally, are always loose. Thus in the sentence,

You will always be fools, and we shall never be gentlemen

the peculiar piquancy of each independent statement and of the sentence as a whole has its source in the addition of the second idea to the first. It should be made clear, too, that although it is possible to insert a period before the close of a loose sentence and still make sense, if the sentence is a good one, we ought not. For the well-constructed loose sentence has a pattern which looks forward from the beginning, to a rounded-out rhythmic unity. There can be no stop until the close without violence to the whole structure. The following *loose* sentence furnishes an unmistakable illustration of this fact:

That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.

—Thomas Huxley.

One of the effects of the periodic structure is to emphasize the end. There is, even in a short periodic sentence, a piling up of idea, a suspension, which makes the end important and conspicuous—"More akin to an opera than to a play it [Greek tragedy] had as its basis, *music*." In the longer periodic sentence this effect is augmented, for the reason that attention is compelled for a relatively long time. Such a sentence winds up the mind like a spring. The key word or phrase releasing the accumulated force

comes like a climax. This is evident in such sentences as this:

> To talk at a distance, when you have nothing to say though you were ever so near; to go fast from this place to that, with nothing to do either at one or the other:—these are powers certainly.
>
> —Ruskin.

There are those who advocate the cultivation of the periodic rather than the loose style, and perhaps for beginners it is well to master the periodic form first, but it is highly desirable to understand the loose as well. It may be argued that it is easier to secure unity in the periodic sentence; but the unity of the well-written loose sentence is quite as perfect as that of the periodic. A Cape Cod house is quite as organic and satisfying as the Dutch Colonial, though perhaps it must be admitted that it takes a surer architectural taste to know just the proportion and position of the parts in the Cape Cod structure to secure an effect of balance and beauty. So with periodic and loose sentences. Like the Dutch Colonial house, the periodic sentence is a neat, tight little structure, in which the main idea is not expressed until the whole is rounded out; and like the Cape Cod cottage, which would be complete in a way without the wing, but yet has a place for just the right addition, the loose sentence is more rambling. Yet its freedom must be within strict bounds: the bounds of proportion, harmony, good taste; and when it has been completed it should show both care and design and skill in execution.

It would seem that at the present time there is a tendency, along with a prevailing shorter sentence, toward the periodic structure. But this again is no argument against the loose sentence. Most good styles contain both types. The important thing for the student is that he shall write well whatever kind of sentence he attempts, and to do this he must practise on both kinds.

EXERCISES

1. Study these examples of the periodic and loose sentences from the point of view of unity, emphasis, economy of the reader's attention, cadence, euphony:

Periodic (the meaning suspended until the end):

If any young man could found a society where people speak only what they think and tell only what they know —in the first words that come to hand—that would be, at last, a school of Literature. (Raleigh)

Loose (the meaning not suspended until the end):

Ghost-like in their white clothes, they could not distinguish each other's features, and their feet made no sound on the soft earth. (Conrad)

Periodic:

The only way to understand a great poem is to approach it with the conviction that the great poet, speaking deliberately, means what he says. (J. Middleton Murry)

Loose:

Fine gentlemen and fine ladies are charming to contemplate in history; their memoirs and their country houses give us a certain kind of pleasure which we no longer provide for our posterity. But their excellences, even when real, were by no means supreme, and they were an incredibly expensive product: Hogarth's *Gin Lane* gives a vivid idea of the price that was paid for them. (Bertrand Russell)

Periodic:

On the whole, Joanna, like most women, enjoyed the War. As it went on through the months she enjoyed it better. The new experience of having an interest outside the round of one's daily life was too pleasing and vital not to be clung to. (Sheila Kaye-Smith)

2. In the extracts given below some sentences are loose, some periodic. Identify each. What seems to be the effect upon the style of a prevailingly periodic or prevailingly loose sentence?

> New novels are decidedly more plentiful than new planets, yet the reader of Mr. Bullitt's first work of fiction gets at least a distant imitation of the thrill felt by Keats's watcher of the skies. Mr. Bullitt is a planet all in the making, still largely in the incandescent state, spitting blue flames, of a fearfully hot temperature, but with the chemical stuff that will make fine protoplasm when it cools. Unusual talent is necessary to write a book that is so good at the same time it is so bad.[1]

> It is a sad reflection that this good man's end was pitiful. A trusted brother in the church absconded with all our principal's modest savings. They were small enough, for he was liberal in his charities beyond the bonds of discretion. But this blow both in its moral and in its physical aspect overwhelmed him. He fell into a state of melancholia, and I remember him, in later years, a mild, vague-eyed broken figure on the Queenshaven streets.
>
> —Ludwig Lewisohn, *Upstream.*

> He must have been very drunk, for at last the heavy sleep gripped him with the suddenness of a magic spell, and the last word lengthened itself into an interminable, noisy, indrawn snore. And then even the snoring stopped, and all was still.
>
> —Joseph Conrad, *The End of the Tether.*

3. (a) In your day's reading pick out a half-dozen loose, a half-dozen periodic sentences and bring them to class. Analyze these sentences for effectiveness.

(b) Are the styles of the selections you have read markedly periodic or loose? If either one, what is the effect?

4. Analyze several paragraphs of your last themes to find whether you are writing more loose or more periodic sentences.

[1] Ernest Sutherland Bates, in *The Saturday Review of Literature.*

Which do you write the more successfully? Do your loose sentences, in spite of their freer structure, still have design, like a well built Cape Cod cottage, or are they like an old fashioned Middle Western farmhouse, to which crude additions have been made from time to time without regard to plan or beauty?

3. Try reconstructing some of the sentences given above, turning the loose into periodic, the periodic into loose constructions. Do the same for a number of your own sentences. Do you note that the periodic sentence appears to be the more "literary," while the loose structure admits of more easy conversational effects?

Balanced Sentence.—All good sentences must have symmetry, with that quality which conveys to the reader a sense of their equilibrium and their inner harmony and proportion. This in a larger sense may be spoken of as balance. But there is also the technically balanced sentence, which is especially useful for presenting parallel ideas, either in support of each other or in antithesis. The balanced sentence is really a special kind of loose sentence. It is fitted for a particular type of work which it can do more effectively and more economically than any other, and that work is to throw into emphatic juxtaposition ideas which bear a peculiar and definite relationship to each other. The shading of meaning possible in such a construction has been pointed out in connection with the sentence,

> You will always be fools, and we shall never be gentlemen

in which the otherwise crass and bald statement of the first clause is relieved by the evident whimsicality of the second. The simplest kind of balanced structure is in a compound sentence where there is mere addition, as in:

> Camila was never cross to Don Jaime, and she was never demonstrative.

> The way was long, and the wind was cold.

Effective balance occurs when the two parts are exactly set alongside each other in parallel construction, as in:

> Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes;
> Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise.

Unusually forceful effects may be secured through placing emphatically contrasting ideas opposite each other. The following antithetical and alternative constructions are illustrative:

> He humbled himself in the dust before his Maker, but he set his foot upon the neck of his king. (Macaulay)

> We must hang together, or we shall hang separately.

In the balanced sentence antithesis heightens the value of both parts. In the following sentence we not only have the weighing of one idea against another but a structure in which one half is the reverse of the other half:

> 1 2 3
> Man is the subject of the Greek drama;
> 3 2 1
> the subject of the modern novel is Tom and Dick.

The following sentence illustrates a common variety of balance in presenting contrasting ideas:

> As we must account for every idle word, so we must account for every idle silence. (Franklin)

Stevenson, in speaking of the over-industrious person, uses a double antithesis:

> He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return.

This sentence also illustrates a rather frequent type of balance which has not yet been mentioned—that is, balance between minor elements in the sentence: *sows hurry* and *reaps indigestion* are balanced. Other examples occur in:

There was in Mary Viner a *gentleness that consented,* and a *young idealism that rebelled.* (Warwick Deeping)

Weak and ill in body, Lawrence was *worried* and *anxious in mind.* (Percival Wren)

The emphatic value of antithesis or contrast may also be derived from sentences which are not balanced. If adjectives in series, or lists of names are arranged so that things most unlike are placed next to each other, the effect is both interesting and emphatic:

The time has come, the Walrus said,
To talk of many things;
Of *shoes*—and *ships*—and *sealing-wax*—
Of *cabbages*—and *kings.*

Rupert Brooke enumerates the distractions and vulgarities which surround Niagara Falls:

Hotels, powerhouses, bridges, trains, picture postcards, sham legends, stalls, booths, rifle-galleries, and side-shows frame them about. And there are Touts. . . . There are touts insinuating, and touts vacuous, greasy touts, brazen touts, and upper-class, refined, gentlemanly, take-you-by-the-arm touts: touts who intimidate and touts who wheedle; professionals, amateurs, and dilettanti, male and female. . . .

Words may be arranged in what seems to be a climax; then instead of capping the climax in the manner which the reader has been led to expect, the sentence may finish with a wholly unexpected idea:

We had insufficient water, insufficient rice and macaroni, no meat nor vegetables, and insufficient bread, and were perfectly fit and healthy. (Percival Wren)

He had a face of strong, natural, sterling insignificance. (Jane Austen)

Only three people have ever really understood the Schleswig-Holstein business—the Prince Consort, who is dead—a German professor, who has gone mad—and I, who have forgotten all about it. (Palmerston)

The device of arrangement which lets the reader down so suddenly at the end of a series is called anticlimax, because it is the opposite from climax. Because of the sudden contrast introduced at the end, the effect is humorous.

A special form of the balanced antithetical structure, one with great possibilities for emphasis, if skillfully constructed, is the sentence of denial and affirmation. The following is illustrative:

They are not beautiful: they are only decorated. They are not clean: they are only shaved and starched. They are not dignified: they are only fashionably dressed. They are not educated: they are only college passmen. They are not religious: they are only pew renters; they are not moral: they are only conventional. . . . They are not prosperous: they are only rich. They are not loyal: they are only servile; not dutiful, only sheepish; not spirited, only patriotic; not courageous, only quarrelsome; not determined, only obstinate; not masterful, only domineering; not self-controlled, only obtuse; not self-respecting, only vain; not kind, only sentimental; not social, only gregarious; not considerate, only polite; not intelligent, only opinionated; not progressive, only factious; not imaginative, only superstitious; not just, only vindictive; not generous, only propitiatory; not disciplined, only cowed; and not truthful at all.

—Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman.*

One problem for the student, in using balanced structure, the simplest types of which have just been illustrated,

is to compose a sentence which is not artificially symmetrical, yet will present to the inner ear an effect of harmony and just proportion. The change of a word or phrase would upset the balance in the following sentence, "Chinese education produced stability and art; it failed to produce progress or science." Leave off the last two words *or science* and the cadence of the whole sentence is at once marred. Only in practice and a disciplined ear is there safety in such matters.

EXERCISES

1. Study the following sentences for balance. Analyze them for effectiveness.

In like manner, you must be above your knowledge, not under it, or it will oppress you; and the more you have of it, the greater will be the load.

—Newman, *Idea of a University.*

From Bergson to Croce is an impossible transition; there is hardly a parallel in all their lives. Bergson is a mystic who translates his visions into deceptive clarity; Croce is a sceptic with an almost German gift for obscurity. Bergson is religiously-minded and yet talks like a thorough-going evolutionist; Croce is an anti-clerical who writes like an American Hegelian. Bergson is a French Jew who inherits the traditions of Spinoza and Lamarck; Croce is an Italian Catholic who has kept nothing of his religion except its scholasticism and its devotion to beauty.

—Will Durant, *The Story of Philosophy.*

All natural talk is a festival of ostentation; and by the laws of the game each accepts and fans the vanity of the other.

—Stevenson, *Talks and Talkers.*

Macaulay thought Boswell succeeded because he was an ass, and Carlyle thought it was because Boswell reverenced great men.

Every book that we take up without a purpose is an opportunity lost of taking up a book with a purpose; every bit of stray information which we cram into our heads without any sense of its importance, is for the most part a bit of the most useful information driven out of our heads and choked off from our minds.

—Frederick Harrison, *How to Read.*

Mrs. Wicken, who opened the house door, eyed the effect severely. She also was in black,—new black, cheap black, in contrast to Martha's, which was old, and Joanna's which was costly. The three women were like crows on the doorstep of the farm.

—Sheila Kaye-Smith, *Joanna Godden Married.*

The uses of logic are chiefly negative; its function is, not so much to teach us to go right, as to keep us from going wrong. (Mill)

They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking about their own affairs. (Stevenson)

I trust there are few men so unhappy as never to have learned anything from their inferiors; and I fear there are few men so wise as never to have imitated anything but what was deserving of imitation. (Ruskin)

Learning without thought is labor lost; thought without learning is the death of the mind. (Confucius)

2. Make a collection of effective balanced sentences, and turn these in to your teacher.

B-100

3. Do you write balanced sentences? Try to include some good ones in your next theme. For that matter try composing some for the sake of practice—you will find it an interesting exercise.

Parallel Structure.—An arrangement closely related to the balanced sentence is that of parallel structure. The grammatical problems, connected with parallelism have already been considered; but it is even more important to deal with this construction as a means to effectiveness. Parallelism has so much rhetorical significance that to do it anything like justice would require much more space than is here available. Parallelism is a means of economy, in that through its use much can be said in little; it is a means of showing exact relationships in thought, for the similar structure indicates equality and likeness in ideas; it is an instrument of vivid, energetic expression; it is the most natural and effective way to climaxes in thought; and altogether, used rightly, it is a valuable aid to clear, vigorous style. Note the combination of qualities of effectiveness in the following sentence from Goldsmith. Goldsmith had been asked a question on continental travel:

> I recommended it by all means to the sick if they are without the sense of smelling, and to the poor if they are without the sense of feeling, and to both if they can discharge from their minds all idea of what in England we call comfort.
>
> —IRVING, *Oliver Goldsmith.*

And note the cumulative power of parallel elements arranged in climactic order in the following:

> Why had Jesus been crucified—He who had cherished little children, who had given food to the multitude, who had cured the blind, and who had chosen, out of love and kindness, to be born in the midst of the poor, in a stable?
>
> —FLAUBERT, *A Simple Heart.*

But, let us hasten to add, parallelism is most readily abused and can be easily overworked to the point of disagreeable mannerism and artificiality. Macaulay was in many ways a greater writer, and he did much for English prose; but skillful as he was in the use of parallel structure, he sometimes fell victim to its insidious attractions, with the result that today many discriminating readers are repelled by what seems a wearisomely reiterated and somewhat overwrought mannerism.[1] What has just been said, in general, applies to parallel structure both within the sentence and within the paragraph. We are here, of course, concerned only with the sentence.

A particular kind of parallelism occurs in the accumulation of words or phrases for the purpose of giving an impression of running the gamut of possibilities. Thus Plato, wishing to emphasize the racial purity of the Athenians, declares:

> We have no Pelopses or Cadmuses or Ægyptuses or Danauses, or any others out of all the mob of Hellenized barbarians, dwelling among us; no, this is the land of pure Greeks, with no mixture of foreign elements. . . .
>
> —LONGINUS, *On the Sublime.*

Galsworthy gives the effect of the variety and multiplicity of things that catch the attention of the traveler in one sentence; he is writing of Jon Forsyte in Spain:

> . . . for he reached each new place entirely without hope or fever, and could concentrate immediate attention on the donkeys, and tumbling bells, the priests, patios, beggars, children, crow-

[1] In fairness to Macaulay we wish to append these sentences:

"Yet Macaulay's manner of writing has been in the highest measure an influence with me. I have learned from him to say what I mean and to mean what I say—to cut my sentences short—not to be afraid of repeating the same word, not to talk about the 'former' and the 'latter,' but to call men and things whatever they are."—E. A. FREEMAN, *Forum,* April, 1892.

ing cocks, sombreros, cactus hedges, old high white villages, goats, olive-trees, greening plains, singing birds in tiny cages, water-sellers, sunsets, melons, mules, great churches, pictures, and swimming grey-brown mountains of a fascinating land.

—*The Forsyte Saga.*

EXERCISES

1. Study the following sentences for parallel structure. Pick out parallel elements. Note that parallel elements are seldom *exactly* alike in structure. Good writers are not slavish about such things; they know that the most pleasing effects are produced through unity in variety.

(a) To organize our knowledge, to systematize our reading, to save, out of the relentless cataract of ink, the immortal thoughts of the greatest—this is a necessity, unless the productive ingenuity of man is to lead us at last to a measureless and meaningless chaos.

—Frederic Harrison, *How to Read.*

(b) She was so conscious that she ought to sympathize, so anxious to show that there was no barrier between them, so eager to be all she ought to be, that her voice almost purred.

—Galsworthy, *Fraternity.*

(c) There are men, who, when in difficulties, originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the influence of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration, on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted magnanimous bearing, and an energy and keenness which is but made more intense by opposition.

—John Henry Newman, *Idea of a University.*

(d) . . . My lords, I do not mean now to go farther than just to remind your lordships of this—that Mr. Hastings' government was one whole system of oppression, of robbery of individuals, of spoliation of the public, and of the suppression of the whole system of the English government, in order to vest in the worst of the natives all the power that could possibly exist in any government; in order to defeat the ends which all governments ought, in common, to have in view. In the name of the Commons of England, I charge all this villainy upon Warren Hastings, in this last moment of my application to you. . . .

Do you want a criminal, my lords? When was there so much iniquity ever laid to the charge of any one? No, my lords, you must not look to punish any other such delinquent from India. Warren Hastings has not left substance enough in India to nourish such another delinquent. . . .

Therefore, it is with confidence that, ordered by the Commons,

I impeach Warren Hastings, Esquire, of high crimes and misdemeanors.

I impeach him in the name of the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled, whose parliamentary trust he has betrayed.

I impeach him in the name of all the Commons of Great Britain, whose national character he has dishonoured.

I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose laws, rights, and liberties he has subverted; whose properties he has destroyed; whose country he has laid waste and desolate.

I impeach him in the name and by the virtue of those eternal laws of justice which he has violated.

I impeach him in the name of human nature itself, which he has cruelly outraged, injured, and oppressed, in both sexes, in every age, rank, situation, and condition of life.

—Edmund Burke, *The Impeachment of Warren Hastings.*

(e) He had walked down Bird Cage Walk, down the Mall, where chairs and lights and carriages denoted that London fashion was again bestirring in its futile quest, down the Strand, where vans, hucksters' cars, and bustling citizens bespoke a life, vulgar and pushing, yet at least intelligible, and found his old resting place on the wooden wall by London river.

—James Boyd, *Drums.*

(f) I must make another effort at once. I must begin all over again. I must try to write simply, fully, freely, from my heart.

—Katherine Mansfield, *The Dove's Nest.*

2. Watch your reading for examples of parallel structure. Discriminate between effective and ineffective parallelism. Do you find any styles unpleasantly "mannered" because of excessive use of parallelism?

3. (a) Study your writing for parallelism. Have you learned to use this structure successfully?

(b) Practise writing paragraphs of sentences largely parallel in structure.

(c) Write one paragraph in which you use parallel structure specifically to build up to a climax.

(d) Try parallelism in producing an effect of anti-climax.

4. Balanced sentences are often parallel in structure; in fact, they usually are. Study for effective parallelism the sentences listed under Balanced Structure.

Detailed Order of Elements—Inversion, or Transposition.—The normal word order in the English sentence is the most obvious one: subject—verb—complement; adjective preceding the substantive; other modifiers as near the elements they modify as possible. Thus,

I have always held the old-fashioned opinion that the primary object of a work of fiction should be to tell a story. (Wilkie Collins)

This order is, however, regularly transposed in interrogative sentences and frequently in exclamatory sentences. The interrogative form is,

Do you hold the old-fashioned opinion . . . . ?

The exclamatory form might be:

What an old-fashioned opinion—to hold that the primary object of a work of fiction should be to tell a story!

The imperative may seem to be inverted, but except in such an emphatic form as, *Do you wait here,* and in such archaic constructions as, *Get ye hence,* it really is not. The sentence *Come to me,* does not illustrate inversion, but a suppression of the subject. The sentence completed would read, *You come to me.*

There are various other cases where transposition of sentence elements occurs—usually for rather definite rhetorical reasons. Thus, transposed order is frequently a means to economy and clearness. Inversion often saves readjustment of the supplementary images which so often come flocking, whether we will or no, upon the presentation of an idea. It is, for example, especially useful to one making a statement to which he wishes to make reservations. If the main statement is made first and is followed by a modifying element, the mind has taken a certain set, as it were, out of which it must be jolted when it comes to the qualification. Examples of recognition of this fact may be found in the writings of almost any careful scientist or philosopher. One or two will suffice to make the point clear:

In default of a recognized term, I have called the perfection or virtue of the intellect by the name of philosophy. (Newman)

Here the phrase "In default of a recognized term" serves as a sort of qualification. The writer does not want his

definition to be taken as a dogmatic assertion; it is merely tentative, and his modifying idea placed at the beginning notifies the reader of this fact. The economy secured in the following sentences by stating the exception first is obvious:

> Except Marvell and Oldham, every leading writer of the imagination, until the close of the century, was in some degree a constructor of plays. (Gosse)

> In less technical language this means that a forcible writer knows not only what he wishes to say, but what he wishes to imply. (Barrett Wendell)

> To recognize this trait distinctly, it will be well, I think, to revert to a few familiar examples. (Barrett Wendell)

In each case the writer skillfully directs the mind of the reader toward the right "set" before the main idea is stated.

Recognition of the value of inversion in forestalling necessary readjustment of idea and image is to be seen in the tendency in narrative writing to place adverbial phrases and clauses of time and of place early in the sentence. The practice may have arisen from the psychological fact that people who hear of anything like to know the *when* and *where,* even before the *what.* It is a very old custom for stories to begin with something like "Once upon a time, in a great forest," and so on. It is obviously easier to visualize and understand, once we have the setting in time and place. And there is undoubted economy in guarding against a necessity for revision of visual and other images that inevitably present themselves when the mind attends to a recital of a narrative; at any rate, though there is no rule whatever, the tendency does exist, and attentive writers soon discern its force. The examples given here are typical:

Over the edge of the huge basket, slung behind, peered a bailiff, two felons in clinking irons, and a sailor with a patch on his eye. (James Boyd)

Five days later, Johnny Fraser, sitting stiff and cold beside the driver of a canvas-covered travelling wagon, crawled along the sandy post road to White Haven. (James Boyd)

On the first of September, within a fortnight of Keats's return from the North, appeared the threatened attack on him in Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine*. (Sydney Colvin)

In October, 1893, after an oral examination which, thanks to my mother's instruction, I passed with ease, I was admitted to the High School of Queenshaven. (Ludwig Lewisohn)

In the clause, sentence, or paragraph, as in the old-time minstrel show, the places that attract most attention are the ends—the beginning and end. In the minstrel show the wittiest comedians occupied the end positions; they did most of the talking and received most of the notice, most of the applause. The minstrels who made up the rest of the line contributed to the general effect, but they remained relatively obscure. In a good sentence every word contributes to the effect, is a part of the logical train of ideas; but the words or phrases which first catch the eye and which last receive our attention have a decided advantage over other words. Ideas placed at the beginning or end of a sentence are thus emphatic by position. Expert writers make good use of this fact. "Upon this principle I take my stand," exclaims the orator, and the phrase *Upon this principle* at once becomes emphatic by position. In the sentence "Lie he could not, though he should die for it," the idea contained in *lie* is similarly stressed. Moreover, in both of these sentences there is a degree of general emphasis secured through

the inverted order: not only is the transposed element thrown into relief, but the whole expression is invigorated.

The value of inversion in securing emphasis is readily apparent in this virile sentence from Walter Raleigh's *Letters:*

If you want to read a great living English author, read Thomas Hardy; *if you want to read an author of twenty times Bernard Shaw's imagination, who combines truth and poetry in dealing with Ireland,* read J. M. Synge.

Other excellent instances of emphasis through inversion occur in the following:

Superior as they were in charm and finish, weightier in judgment and purer in style, they did not please so completely. (Gosse)

Three times did I compose the first chapter, and *twice* the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. (Gibbon)

This last is an exemplification of a type of emphasis by position which has been carried over into English from a Latin construction. It is called the inverted object and may be further illustrated by such sentences as "Him, also, he would have later forsworn" and "Him they made president." In Keats's *Hyperion* one finds, "Farewell sad I took and higher came." And again:

> Me thoughtless, why should I
> Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?

Barrett Wendell effectively uses this inversion in a definition:

Clearness—the quality of style before us now—I may best define as the distinguishing quality of a style that cannot be misunderstood.

The construction is common in our older literature. Milton's *Paradise Lost,* for instance, contains numerous ex-

amples. It is somewhat rare in modern writing, however, and is to be found as a rule only in a context of unusual dignity or in cases where an archaic or exotic effect is desired. Thus, in Jowett's scholarly translation of Plato's *Gorgias,* there occurs the inversion:

> . . . and *him* who neglects philosophy I regard as an inferior man, who will never aspire to anything great or noble.

And one finds a writer like P. C. Wren, in an endeavor to give the flavor of the Arab speech, using such forms as,

> Him also this Emir, el Hamel el Kabir, slew. (Percival Wren)

A modification of the same influence is to be found in the sentence from Irving, beginning, "Conversation, grave, discursive, and disputatious." This inverted or appositive use of the adjective is also a hang-over from early Latin influence upon our language. It is now more common than the inverted objective, but, even so, is employed sparingly by good writers. Such constructions can quickly give an impression of artificiality.

A feeling for symmetry and cadence has been largely responsible for such English constructions as the anticipatory *it* and the expletive *there,* in sentences like "It is not necessary for you to go," and "There were four men in the party." This same feeling frequently leads to inverted order as a means to smoothness and balance. Examples of this are easy to find.

> *While his eyes were closed* he had the mastery of all pictures of light and color and warmth, but an irresistible fascination compelled him *every few minutes* to reopen them, and *in the sad space around* he could not create any happiness. (James Stephens)

> After a great interval the policeman again approached carrying three mattresses and three rough blankets, and these he bundled through the hole. (James Stephens)

Inversion also serves for the convenient grouping of related ideas. Edmund Gosse was evidently working for grouping, as well as emphasis and symmetry, when he inverted both of his important modifiers in this sentence:

After this distinct false start, and *after several amateur hands had tried their prentice skill on the new-found drama,* it passed into the care of the literary profession.

Words or groups of words may be thus transposed for the sake of improved transitions between different sentences or between different parts of the same sentence. This is, of course, but the working out of the familiar architectural principle that the individual unit must be composed with reference to its neighbors. Along with proper emphasis, the total result should be one of smoothness, of harmony between parts, a pleasing symmetry in which all overtoppling effects are avoided, a fine rhythm in the smaller divisions caught up into the larger rhythmic movement of the whole. Some such considerations as these must have guided Stephens, Lewes, and Ruskin in shaping sentences such as the following:

After a time he felt hungry, and *thrusting his hand into his wallet* he broke off a piece of one of his cakes and looked about for a place where he might happily eat it. *By the side of the road* there was a well; just a little corner filled with water. *Over it* was a rough stone coping, and *around, hugging it on three sides almost from sight,* were thick, quiet bushes. He would not have noticed the well at all but for a thin stream, the breadth of two hands, which tiptoed away from it through a field. *By this well* he sat down and scooped the water in his hand, and it tasted good.

—James Stephens, *The Crock of Gold.*

Whatever is stuck on as ornament affects us as ornament; we do not think an old hag young and handsome because the jewels flash from her brow and bosom; *if we envy her wealth,* we do not admire her beauty.

What "fine writing" is to prosaists, insincere imagery is to poets;

it is introduced for effect, not used as expression. *To the real poet* an image comes spontaneously, or *if it comes as an afterthought,* it is chosen because it expresses his meaning and helps to paint the picture which is in his mind, not because it is beautiful in itself.

—George Henry Lewes, *Principles of Success in Literature.*

There was another great difference between Turner and other men. *In doing these drawings for the commonest publications of the day, and for a remuneration altogether contemptible,* he never did his work badly because he thought it beneath him, or because he was ill-paid. There does not exist such a thing as a slovenly drawing by Turner. *With what people were willing to give him for his work* he was content; but he considered that work in its relation to himself, not in its relation to the purchaser. . . . *According to the time and means at his disposal,* he always did his best.

—Ruskin, *Lectures on Art and Architecture.*

Study in particular this passage, famous for its rhythmic qualities:

Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. *The Egyptian mummies which Cambyses or time hath spared,* avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

—Sir Thomas Browne, *Urn Burial.*

Inverted sentences, especially those inverted for emphasis, might well be called "display sentences." The writer, like the window-dresser, puts out his best wares where they will make the best showing—where they will create the greatest effect. But the student should know that it is easy to overdo the consciously inverted structure. It is well to display the most significant idea, but if this is done at the expense of the general comeliness of the sentence it is unwise. The sentence must not be made to

seem unnatural—unidiomatic—nor must the sequence of the paragraph in which it occurs be impaired.

Especially objectionable is the artificial form of inversion to be found in such expressions as, "She stirred not; she spoke no word." This is emphasis at the expense of good taste.

EXERCISES

1. In preparation for a lecture on Johann Wolfgang Goethe, a teacher noted for his skill in using language first jotted down in his notes a list of the poet's qualities in this order:

> He was well born, well educated, handsome, healthy, influential, beloved of women—

but at this point, he stopped and began anew with definite changes in order:

> He was well born, well educated, handsome, beloved of women; he enjoyed the friendship of his ablest contemporaries, was famous at twenty-five, was influential, learned, traveled, healthy.

Study this revised order. Can you justify it? Can you suggest still further changes?

2. In cases where you feel the order could be improved, try rearranging the elements of the following sentences:

> A bell jangled, as a rickety cart, drawn by a donkey, creaked along over the rough pavement carrying an old woman.

> Actual reproductions of an Elizabethan stage have been attempted with considerable success at various times.

3. (a) Study the sentences listed under *Periodic* and *Loose* for the effects of inversion. Can you always account for the inversion?

(b) In the same way study the sentences illustrating phrases and clauses, pages 164-166.

(c) Study these sentences for order, and suggest possible changes:

> During these early years Trudeau lived the life of the people in many ways. (Chalmers)

> It was Francis Grierson, some years ago, in a brief article in the *New Age*, who first called attention to the very remarkable qualities of a new book called *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, just then published by Heinemann at a shilling. (William McFee)

> We see, then, here something which was not difficult to discern, even in the more frugal and guarded expression of the Preface. (Saintsbury)

> Moreover he, with his usual dislike and distrust of the historic method, fences with, or puts off, the inquiry what the dates of the *actual* specimens which we possess of this literature may be. (Saintsbury)

4. Study the following examples of inversion. Since inversion usually occurs in response to a number of demands, it is difficult to isolate examples and say, "This is for emphasis," "this is for transition," "this for rhythm," and so on. The labels given are therefore only approximate, and represent the most apparent, not the only, reasons for a transposed order.

Transition—Symmetry—Cadence—Emphasis:

> There were six Ambassadors, with a train of about five hundred persons, and their entry was very magnificent, suitable to the Grandeur of the Master and the Importance of their Business. *When their Treaty was finished, wherein I did them several good Offices by the Credit I now had, or at least appeared to have* at Court, their Excellencies, who were privately told how much I have been their Friend, made me a visit in Form.
>
> —Swift, *A Voyage to Lilliput.*

Symmetry—Economy—Emphasis—Transition:

There had been a royal dog-fight in the ravine at the back of the rifle-butts, between Learoyd's Jock and Ortheris's Blue Rot—both mongrel Rampur hounds, chiefly ribs and teeth. It lasted for twenty happy, howling minutes, and then Blue Rot collapsed and Ortheris paid Learoyd three rupees, and we were all very thirsty. A dog-fight is a most heating entertainment, quite apart from the shouting, because Rampurs fight over a couple of acres of ground. Later, when the sound of belt-badges clinking against the necks of beer-bottles had died away, conversation drifted from dog to man fights of all kinds. Humans resemble red-deer in some respects. Any talk of fighting seems to wake up a sort of imp in their breasts, and they bell one to the other, exactly like challenging bucks. This is noticeable even in men who consider themselves superior to privates of the line; it shows the refining influence of civilization and the march of progress.

—KIPLING, "The Solid Muldoon."

Emphasis—Symmetry—Rhythm:

Out of a large acquaintance with professors, I can testify that Professor St. Peter is not an ordinary professor. (Stuart P. Sherman)

On a Sunday or in an evening after the hours of business, some courts and alleys, which a few hours before had been alive with hurrying feet and anxious faces, are as silent as a country churchyard. (Macaulay)

Of the same nature is hazing, with this difference, that hazing is essentially the coward's part. (David Starr Jordan)

Unprepossessing, ugly, vain, flippant, obscene, unscrupulous, even at times dishonest,—Voltaire was a man with the faults of his time and place, missing hardly one. (Durant)

Because they had no family, because they were twins, and because they were brought up by women, they were silent. (Wilder)

5. Compare the following versions as to their relative success:

Diana of the Ephesians is *great*.
Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

The glory is all *his*.
His is all the glory.

The day is *gone* when my heart was young and gay.
Gone is the day, etc.

One can argue more and better *in æsthetics* than in any other subject.
In æsthetics one can argue more and better than in any other subject.

Fleur Forsyte was a *tall, dark girl, the possessor of a beautiful figure,* the daughter of Soames Forsyte.
A tall, dark girl, the possessor of a beautiful figure was Fleur Forsyte, the daughter of Soames.

Whenever you hear of a new book's being published, read an old one. (Hearn)
Read an old book whenever you hear of a new one's being published.

To err is human.
It is human to err.

Making mistakes is a fault inherent in human nature.
It is a fault inherent in human nature to make mistakes.

6. The effect of shifting an important idea to a position of less prominence is exemplified in two sentences quoted by Longinus.

A hair's breadth now decides our destiny, Ionians, whether we shall live as free men or as slaves—ay, as runaway slaves. Now, therefore, if you choose to endure a little hardship, you will be able at the cost of some present exertion to overcome your enemies. (Herodotus)

Ionians, now is the time for you to endure a little hardship; for a hair's breadth will now decide our destiny. (Herodotus)

Study especially this sentence, remarkable for its emphasis, rhythmic effect, beauty:

Precipitous, with his reeling satyr rout about him, repeopling and re-illuming suddenly the waste places, drunk with a new fury beyond the grape, Bacchus, born in fire, fire-like flings himself at the Cretan. (Charles Lamb)

VII

Comeliness of Pattern—Beauty in Sentences

Beauty is an elusive quality, but there are certain characteristics of beauty which can readily be understood and applied to the sentence.

That which is beautiful has about it an air of completeness, of finality, of achievement. A beautiful flower, or statue, or building gives a sense of fitness—of being just right. One does not think of improving the fringed gentian. The dome of the capitol at Washington is eminently satisfactory as it is. The Venus de Milo, though without arms, has for centuries been an ideal of beauty. Perfectly beautiful things are perhaps not possible, yet many things are so satisfying that we look to them as models of excellence. We have all read sentences which seem so completely successful that we can suggest no improvement. Has any one been able to rephrase the ideas in the following sentences so as to make them more satisfying, more beautiful?

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever. (Ecclesiastes)

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.
>
> —SHAKESPEARE, *The Tempest.*

For reasons which will appear later, poetry has more beauty than prose, but prose sentences may also be beautiful:

> The last act is tragic, however happy all the rest of the play; at the last a little earth is thrown upon our head, and that is the end forever. (Pascal)

> Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider. (Bacon)

> Those who wish to forget painful thoughts, do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them: but we can be said only to fulfill our destiny in the place that gave us birth. (Hazlitt)

Beautiful sentences are easy to read; they are constructed so as to emphasize the right parts. They observe, in other words, the principles of economy and force discussed in preceding sections of this chapter. In addition, beautiful prose, like poetry, has certain musical qualities. We shall discuss here two of these qualities: euphony and cadence.[1]

Euphony.—Euphony means pleasantness of sound. Every word is made up of combinations of consonants and vowels. A little experimentation will show that certain groups of vowels and consonants are harmonious, agreeable, and easy to utter. Others, like the tongue-twisters with which we used to amuse ourselves when we were children, are like pecks of pickled peppers. Unless one

[1] In this book we are using the words *cadence* and *rhythm* almost interchangeably.

has a special reason for making a sentence difficult to enunciate, one should take care to make it easy to speak. Reading aloud is always a good test.

Sound combinations may be pleasant in themselves, or they may be agreeable to the reader because of some correspondence between the sound and the idea. Poe[1] tells us that he deliberately chose *nevermore* for a refrain in *The Raven* because he thought it the most sonorous and the most melancholy word in the English language. Certain consonants (s, sh, z), hiss; others are lulling (l, m, n). Those that are suddenly stopped (k, p, t, d, b) have an arresting effect. The vowels called low (ō, ä, ạ), because uttered with the tongue lowered in the mouth, are said to be suited to serious ideas; those called high vowels (ŏ, ĕ, ĭ, ē) are said to be suited to less serious ideas.

The use of alliteration, or the repetition of initial consonants is sometimes effective in prose. Assonance, or the repetition of accented vowels, also contributes to the harmony of sound in the sentence. But such devices cannot be used as extensively in prose as in poetry. An effect of artificiality may so easily result.

As men are wily, so women are wary. (Lodge, *Rosalynde*)

Descend into thine own conscience, and consider with thyselfe, the great difference between staring and starke blynde, witte and wisdom, love and lust: be merrie but with modestie: be sober but not too sullen: be valliant but not too venturous. (Lyly)

In the following modern instance the play on initial consonants is also rather obvious. Certain combinations like "bodily barriers," with their stopped consonants, have a suggestive value. "Soon sank . . . sort," on the other hand, is artificial:

[1] Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition." Available in *Selections from Poe's Literary Criticism,* edited by J. B. Moore, Crofts, 1926, or in Brown's *The Writer's Art,* Harvard University Press, 1921.

I went along it [a path], and soon sank into a sort of dancing twilight of all those tiny trees. There is something subtle and bewildering about that sort of frail and fantastic wood. A forest of big trees seems like a bodily barrier; but somehow that mist of thin lines seems like a spiritual barrier.

—CHESTERTON, *Tremendous Trifles.*

If one is trying to portray a scene of disorder he will create the right effect if his sounds imitate the crashing confusion of the actual scene. In the following we view the deck of a ship following an explosion in the hold:

The deck was a wilderness of smashed timber, lying crosswise like trees in a wood after a hurricane; an immense curtain of soiled rags waved gently before me—it was the mainsail blown to strips.

—CONRAD, *Youth.*

Note the effects contributed by the vowels and consonants in these parts: "wilderness of smashed timber lying crosswise like trees in a wood after a hurricane"; "immense curtain of soiled rags waved gently before me"; blown to strips."

Euphony,[1] or the arrangement of sounds so as to secure an agreeable effect, has an opposite: *cacophony*. Ordi-

[1] Euphony must not be confused with *euphemism* or with *euphuism*. Euphemism is the use of a pleasant or innocuous term to describe a disagreeable fact. "Passed away" is a euphemism for "died," "unmentionables" for "underwear." During the eighteenth century there was such a horror of calling a spade a spade that "leg" was always "limb," and in a poem "boot" was called "The shining leather that encased the limb." Both euphony and euphemism are considered at some length in the following chapter on Words.

Euphuism dates from a sixteenth-century book by John Lyly called *Euphues and His England.* Its style was artificially elaborate, full of alliteration, assonance, antithesis, and elaborate similes and metaphors.

Ah, my Lucilla, would thou were either less fair, or I more fortunate: either I wiser, or thou milder: either I would I were out of this mad mood, either I would we were both of one mind.

Affected elegance of all kinds we now call "fine writing."

narily cacophony is the result of carelessness on the part of the writer. But some of the sentences already quoted show that cacophony can be used so as to secure pleasing effects. To the ears of English-speaking people, guttural sounds are not pleasant; but note how effectively Lytton Strachey uses alliteration of *g*, a guttural sound, for imitative purposes:

> . . . For a short space his eyes were gladdened by a sea of friendly faces, and his ears by a gathering volume of good guttural sounds. (Lytton Strachey)

It will be seen that by *euphony* we as often as not mean "well-sounding" with reference to the relationship of two or more words to each other in the sentence. We therefore avoid such obviously unpleasant combinations as "A *reflex* of *perplexing complexity*." There is too much clash of sounds here. It is, however, a clash based on likeness rather than opposition—a likeness akin to rhyme. Rhyme should be carefully avoided in prose. Words are said to rhyme when the vowels of the stressed syllables and the consonants succeeding the vowel of the stressed syllables are identical.

> How many times I went up and down the street, and round the *square*—painfully *aware*, etc.
>
> The house has a charm that has *partly* been *imparted* to it by age.

Likewise, except for emphasis, we avoid unnecessary repetition of words in a sentence or in neighboring sentences. "Verbal repetitions?" once exploded Anatole France. "In a writer worthy of the name—remember this—there are no such things."

Cadence.—There have grown up in English usage a body of distinct preferences for a given word order in certain well-known combinations, which, though sometimes ir-

rational enough apparently, may usually be explained by subtle demands of the inner ear for euphony and cadence. Thus we say "brother and sister," rarely "sister and brother"; likewise "bacon and eggs," not "eggs and bacon"; "Stop! Look! Listen," not "Stop! Listen! Look!" It is probably an instinct for pleasant cadence rather than for euphony in the narrower sense that accounts for such combinations.

Speaking broadly, the term *euphony* comprehends the idea of *cadence*. For a well-cadenced sentence is pleasing in sound. But in a more special sense cadence has reference to the large movement of the sentence, to its rhythm, its smoothness and harmony, its balance, its effect of completeness, its ability to create an impression of rightness and beauty.

It is not easy to illustrate matters of cadence; in ordinary reading, cadence is not noted at all, should not be noted in fact, for the movement of prose, like that of a cultivated gentleman, should be such as to attract no special attention. But the practiced ear quickly detects faulty rhythm and balance, quickly responds to harmonious arrangement and beauty of sound. "The ear, or the mind through the ear," says Cicero, "contains in itself a certain natural measure of all spoken sounds." True of spoken language, this is quite as applicable to writing, for when we read, our inner ear keeps company with the eye, and, according to its feeling for harmony, approves or disapproves the pattern of sounds that falls upon it.

"Literature," says Stevenson, "is written by and for two senses: a sort of internal ear, quick to perceive 'unheard melodies' and the eye, which directs the pen and deciphers the printed phrase." And what these senses demand in prose is *comeliness*—comeliness phrase by phrase, comeliness of the completed sentence. This comeliness is secured, in part, by patterns of appropriate sounds and letters in the smaller wholes, in part, by a perpetually

fresh variety of rhythm, in both the smaller and larger movements.

The requirement for prose cadence is illustrated most simply in such a sentence as "The dog ran after the cat," a satisfactory expression easily ruined, for English ears at least, by a change to "The dog after the cat ran." It is met again in such a combination of words as "A dull red blaze," which will not bear a change to "A red dull blaze." What makes one of these combinations satisfactory, one unsatisfactory, it is neither practicable nor necessary to explain here. The important thing is that the distinction exists, and that it is the office of the cultivated ear to detect what is pleasing and what is not. It is not rule, but an educated taste, that determines final judgment in such matters.

The following sentence would be marred by the transposition or elimination of even one word or phrase.

> Nor in books is there such a thing as perfectly adequate human speech, nor are our ears always, or ever, perfectly attuned to the perception of style. (Garrod, *Wordsworth*)

Change the constructions here in almost any way, or leave out such a phrase as "or ever," and the effect is spoiled.

On the other hand, one instantly senses defective cadence in such sentences as these:

> As the raven grew older, it seemed to recognize my feeling toward it. It would return my baleful glare. For hours we would glare at one another.

> The request was granted, and Waldegrave sailed for his native land, two short months after the tragedy, not caring whether he ever reached his destination.

> The variety of mouse which is known as the Japanese dancing or waltzing mouse has been of special interest to biologists and to lovers of pets because of its curious movements.

In none of these last sentences is there that subtle weaving of proper words into proper places necessary to a sound pattern answering to our feeling for cadence and symmetry. Reading them, one has an uncomfortable sense similar to that experienced in seeing a chair with a leg missing, or an animal with its tail lopped off. Such unbalanced, bob-tailed effects are instinctively avoided by the better writers.

Rhyme, alliteration, assonance, onomatopœia, and rhythm are often called *musical* elements or traits. Poetry is more musical, more emotional than prose, is more closely allied to music, and therefore poetry can utilize the musical traits to a greater degree than can prose. Prose is comparatively rational and intellectual in its aim. Poetry is said to sing. But prose talks. However, when the emotions of a writer or speaker of prose are deeply stirred, he, too, may become poetic: his words become less abstract and literal, he uses words which have musical sound, his sentence has a new rhythm. Note the following excerpts:

When I got there the organ was playing the 100th Psalm, and when it was done Mr. Coleridge rose and gave out his text, "And he went up into the mountain to pray, *Himself, Alone.*" As he gave out this text his voice "rose like a steam of rich-distilled perfumes," and when he came to the last two words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, who was then young, as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe.

—HAZLITT.

I did not know how good a man I was till then. I remember the drawn faces, the dejected figures of my two men, and I remember my youth and the feeling that will never come back any more—the feeling that I could last forever, outlast the sea, the earth, and all men; the deceitful feeling that lures on to joys, to perils, to love, to vain effort—to death; the triumphant conviction of strength,

the heat of life in the handful of dust, the glow in the heart that every year grows dim, grows cold, grows small, and expires—and expires, too soon, too soon—before life itself.

—CONRAD, *Youth.*

Both passages are emotional. In both, the sound values and the rhythm have been carefully considered. But while the rhythm of these passages is very marked, the recurrence of stress is not so regular that we are aware of meter. Meter means measure, and whenever the accented syllable occurs at regular intervals we have measure.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

This can be scanned as a perfectly regular pattern of unstressed and stressed syllables:

⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –
⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –
⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –
⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –

But while all good prose should be rhythmical, prose must never be metrical. Good prose rhythm must have variety. Even poetry that is without variation in meter is monotonous; but as has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, prose which has a regular pattern of stressed syllables very soon becomes unpleasantly singsong.

Her shawl would not keep right, and now and then
⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – |

I drew it round her with my arm.
⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – |

Brown planted fields I see, and drooping elms, and the young crows
– – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ – | ⏑ ⏑ – | ⏑

cry from their nests on the knoll.
– | ⏑ ⏑ – | ⏑ ⏑ – |

Rhythm of prose sentences, like the tempo of music, should be suited to the idea or theme. There are slow and smooth rhythms to give dignity, or to suit melancholy thoughts; there are rapid, staccato rhythms suited to times of stress and excitement; there are galloping rhythms, and rhythms suited for sprightly talk.

Speed of tempo, as we have said near the beginning of this chapter, does not depend on sentence length. The long and fast-moving sentence from Thackeray's *Pendennis* quoted on page 185 needs only to be compared with the following passage from Jonson. Thackeray's clauses follow one another in a considerable haste, suggesting the emotional nature of the ideas presented. Ben Jonson speaks with deliberation, pausing frequently so that we may weigh each predication. His sentences are short, but his style is dignified and grave.

There happened in my time one noble speaker, who was full of gravity in his speaking. His language was nobly censorious. No man ever spoke more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces. His hearers could not cough, or look aside from him without loss. He commanded where he spoke.

—*Discoveries.*

Rhythm may be used to imitate any sort of motion. Here is a sentence that reels drunkenly, like its subject:

Holding on by various tables, the Captain had sidled up, without accident to himself or any of the jugs and glasses round about him, to the table where we sat, and had taken his place near the writer, his old acquaintance.

—THACKERAY, *The Newcomes.*

Variety.—This leads to the subject of variety in sentence structure. Good writers are not content to develop one or two effective sentence forms, and leave off

there. A wise writer abhors nothing more than monotony. And to avoid monotony one must be skilled in many and diverse uses. One of Cleopatra's great charms to Antony lay in her "infinite variety." In infinite variety lie charm and interest in writing. Variety in ideas naturally comes first; but variety in methods of expression is also essential. For the young writer, the way to variety is through trial and error. Deliberate experiment with new sentence forms is not only permissible, but laudable. He will write well only when he has achieved a style of naturally varied structure: Not all long, not all short sentences, but a natural admixture of both; not all loose and not all periodic structure, not too much balanced phrase and clause, not too frequent and unrelieved parallelism; rather, a fine, easy flow of language that unobtrusively does just the work for which it was intended.

It should always be remembered that the rhythm of the sentence is necessarily conditioned by the general rhythm of the paragraph, and of the whole composition. A suitable rhythm is usually not a constant and invariable one, even where whole paragraphs are built up in parallel structure; it is, instead, caught up, and, through subtle gradations, just as in music lesser movements are merged into greater ones, becomes enveloped in and fused with the larger rhythms of the whole. The result is pleasing unity in variety. Excellent examples of this are easily found in the works of good writers, who seldom monotonously run through a paragraph with the same construction, in the same cadence, but instinctively work toward a varied yet homogeneous rhythmic composition. The following passage from William James is illustrative:

> Habit is thus the enormous fly-wheel of society, its most precious conservative agent. It alone is what keeps us all within the bounds of ordinance, and saves the children of fortune from the envious uprisings of the poor. It alone prevents the hardest and the most

repulsive walks of life from being deserted by those brought up to tread therein. It keeps the fisherman and the deckhand at sea through the winter; it holds the miner in his darkness and nails the countryman to his log-cabin and his lonely farm through all the months of snow; it protects us from invasions by the natives of the desert and the frozen zone. It dooms us all to fight out the battle of life upon the lines of our nurture or our early choice, and to make the best of a pursuit that disagrees, because there is no other for which we are fitted, and it is too late to begin again. It keeps different social strata from mixing. Already at twenty-five you see the professional mannerisms settling down on the young commercial traveler, on the young doctor, on the young minister, on the young counsellor-at-law. You see the little lines of cleavage running through the character, the tricks of thought, the prejudices, the ways of the "shop," in a word, from which the man can by-and-by no more escape than his coat-sleeve can suddenly fall into a new set of folds. . . .

—*Habit.*

EXERCISES

1. A modern writer on the subject of prose rhythm uses, as an illustration of a word-combination that mysteriously pleases, G. B. Shaw's title, *You Never Can Tell.* Why not write it *You Can Never Tell?* Well, the sound does not suit us: there is something in the lilt of *You Never Can Tell* which satisfies our ear, and we instinctively reject the second arrangement.

(a) Examine a dozen or more titles containing three or more words, to find whether from the point of view of cadence they could be changed to advantage.

(b) Write several titles or inscriptions, revising each one until it satisfies your requirements for rhythm.

2. Study the effects of sound and of rhythm in the following sentences:

> Behold there in the wood the fine madman! He is a palace of sweet sounds and sights; he dilates; he is twice a man; he walks with arms akimbo; he soliloquizes; he accosts the grass and the trees; he feels the blood of the

violet, the clover, the lily, in his veins; and he talks with the brook that wets his foot. (Emerson)

Who will become the king? Will it be Mirabeau, with his black locks? "Through whose shaggy beetle-brows, and rough-hewn, seamed, carbuncled face, there look natural ugliness, smallpox, incontinence, bankruptcy,—and burning fire of genius; the comet-fire glaring fulginous through murkiest confusions?" (Carlyle)

Then suddenly would come a dream of a far different character—a tumultuous dream—commencing with a music as now I often hear in sleep-music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like *that,* gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. (De Quincey)

Groans and tears, looks and gestures, a flush or a paleness, are often the most clear reporters of the heart, and speak more directly to the hearts of others. (Stevenson)

Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious Mankind thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick-succeeding grandeur through the unknown deep. Thus, like a God-created, fire-breathing spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth; then plunge again into the Inane. (Carlyle)

A hint taken, a look understood, conveys the gist of long and delicate explanations; and where the life is known even *yea* and *nay* become luminous. (Stevenson)

Toward the center of the room, seated at desks jammed against one another in defiance of all convenience, telegraph editors, their hands fumbling cables and dispatches from twenty ends of the earth, bellowed items of interest

into the air—assassinations in China, probes, quizzes, scandals, accusations in far-away places. They varied their bellows with occasional shrieks of mysterious significance—usually a misplaced paste pot, a borrowed shears, a vanished copy-boy. (Ben Hecht)

After a few moments of this silence he placed the reed to his lips and played a plaintive little air, and then he spoke to her in a strange voice, coming like a wind from distant places. (James Stephens)

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street. (O. Henry)

She [Mary Viner] splashed the hot water into her basin, and soaped and gloved and towelled herself before rushing downstairs with a red nose and eyes, and a sense of being driven to do a dozen different things at once. More coal had to be put on the fires, the frying pan greased, the kettle filled, the cloths laid on tray and table; cups, spoons, plates, cups and saucers, mustard, bread, butter, marmalade to be collected. And while she hurried about, and was aware of the clatter of her harried handling of all these articles, she remembered that an hour hence she would be washing up the greater number of them and putting them back in their places.

—Deeping, *Doomsday.*

There was a pause. A beautiful procession of clouds, like a flock of sheep, was straying up from the sea, slipping up the valleys between the hills. (Wilder)

Again summer. By the doctor's orders Kovrin returned to the country. He had recovered his health, and no longer saw the Black Monk. It only remained for him to recruit his physical strength. He lived with his father-in-law, drank much milk, worked only two hours a day, never touched wine, and gave up smoking. (Chekov)

3. The question of cadence, it will be remembered, extends beyond the sentence—to the paragraph and to the whole composition. Note in these extracts the rhythmic growth of the paragraph into a harmonious, finely balanced, finely rounded-out whole:

> A poem was no longer to be a story told with picturesque imagery, but was to be a composition in symmetry and keeping. A thought or a feeling was not to be blurted out in the first words that came, but was to be matured by reflection and reduced to its simplest expression. Condensation, terseness, neatness, finish—all qualities hitherto unheard of in English—had to be studied. . . . No writer who neglected the graces of style could gain acceptance by the public.
>
> —MARK PATTISON, *Pope.*

> . . . the meantime we can look at that stately old lady, his mother, a beautiful aged brunette, whose rich-toned complexion is well set off by the complex wrappings of pure white cambric and lace about her head and neck. She is as erect in her comely *embonpoint* as a statue of Ceres, and her dark face, with its delicate aquiline nose, firm proud mouth, and small intense black eye, is so keen and sarcastic in its expression that you instinctively substitute a pack of cards for the chessmen, and imagine her telling your fortune. The small brown hand with which she is lifting her queen is laden with pearls, diamonds, and turquoises; and a large black veil is very carefully adjusted over the crown of her cap, and falls in sharp contrast on the white folds about her neck. It must take a long time to dress that old lady in the morning! But it seems a law of nature that she should be dressed so. She is clearly one of those children of royalty who have never doubted their right divine, and never met with any one so absurd as to question it.
>
> —GEORGE ELIOT, *Adam Bede.*

4. Study the following passages for evidences of the "comely phrase," of varied and harmonious pattern, in its larger relation to the rhythmic movement of the paragraph.

The contradictory mind of the people is strange. They denounce Buonaparte, yet glory in his victories. They tell you of his genius and execrate his government in the same breath. Talking of him as a conqueror, they fire with enthusiasm; as a monarch, they anathematize him. (B. R. Haydon)

Keble was young in years, when he became a University celebrity, and younger in mind. He had the purity and simplicity of a child. He had few sympathies with the intellectual party, who sincerely welcomed him as a brilliant specimen of young Oxford. He instinctively shut up before literary display, and pomp and donnishness of manner, faults which always will beset academical notabilities. He did not respond to their advances. His collision with them (if it may be so called) was thus described by Hurrell Froude in his own way. "Poor Keble!" he used gravely to say, "he was asked to join the aristocracy of talent, but he soon found his level." He went into the country, but his instance serves to prove that men need not, in the event, lose that influence which is rightly theirs, because they happen to be thwarted in the use of the channels natural and proper to its exercise. He did not lose his place in the minds of men because he was out of their sight.

—*Apologia pro Sua Vita.*

But the professor is a tree of which the trunk has been hollowed by fire. He is nearly burned out. He haunts the old home. He clings whimsically to the fleshless companions of his scholarly solitude—those old dress forms. He finds comfort in chatting with the antique sewing-woman; and she saves his life when he is on the point of asphyxiation from the fumes of the old stove, the fire of which has been extinguished by the wind.

—Stuart P. Sherman, *Critical Woodcuts.*

Lieutenant Brayle was more than six feet in height and of splendid proportions, with the light hair and gray-blue

eyes which men so gifted usually find associated with a high order of courage. As he was commonly in full uniform, especially in action, when most officers were content to be less flamboyantly attired, he was a very striking and conspicuous figure. As to the rest, he had a gentleman's manner, a scholar's head, and a lion's heart. His age was about thirty. (Ambrose Bierce)

VIII

Punctuation of the Sentence

The end of punctuation is to help make writing clear and expressive. A treatise might be written on punctuation; in fact, many a one has been written, but no lengthy discussion is needed to say that which is really essential about the subject. There is one great principle to be observed in punctuating, which transcends, and at the same time, comprehends all the rest: Punctuate only when it will help make your meaning clear, and use the punctuation that will best serve to bring out the exact shade of thought and feeling you wish to express. A student who consistently and intelligently sets himself to follow this precept will learn to punctuate in a natural, rational way, where one who mechanically tries to point off his sentences by fixed rules will fail.

Punctuation cannot be considered apart from its function as a vital part of the process of communication. "A writer should as clearly mean his commas as he means his nouns or his verbs," says Arlo Bates, "and nothing but a slovenly habit of mind will allow any student to go on flinging in commas at haphazard, and bestowing upon the reader a semicolon or a period as an excuse for taking breath. To lie by the use of a comma is no less morally wrong than to lie by the use of a substantive. Indeed, as being more sly, it is perhaps worse.

". . . No man can write well who does not punctuate well; who does not vitally mean every punctuation mark as clearly and vigorously as he means every word." [1]

Punctuation is a great aid to clearness. Try to read the following passage rapidly:

The last of the characters I intend to speak of is the greatest so great that as mr chesterton says the world has never been able to do anything but walk round and round him wondering what it shall say beside the great comic figures of the worlds literature figaro falstaff uncle toby beside these wilkins micawber has taken a high place whether he is brewing one of his delightful punches or writing one of his letters surely the most extraordinary letters that the world has ever known no matter what he is doing mr micawber is ever a delight.

Even with careful reading there may be ambiguities. It takes close study to decide whether one shall read

"——wondering what it shall say beside the great comic figures," etc.

"——has taken a high place whether he is brewing one of his delightful punches," etc.,

or whether one should make a full stop after "say," and after "place." Analysis clears up the logical patterns for us, but punctuation would have made the relationships of the parts clear at once.

We must have periods or semicolons to mark the end of every complete clause pattern, unless (as in the one you are reading) some dependent clause is added to it. In that case, if there is a conjunction or conjunctive adverb, the comma will usually suffice. Parenthetical elements must be enclosed to show that they are no part of the basic sentence pattern.

Punctuation should be regarded as a structural matter. It is as important to the meaning of the written sentence as tones of voice, volume, and pauses are to the spoken

[1] *Talks on Writing English,* Second Series, Houghton Mifflin Co.

sentence. Failure to mark with a period or semicolon (unless a connective is used) the division between independent clause patterns indicates a deplorable lack of understanding, a deficiency in logical sense. This failure is called the "comma-fault" or "comma-splice":

The fraternity pledge has to meet certain social standards, if he is unable to do so at first, his fraternity brothers help him.

It should be apparent that the clause ending with the word "standards" is grammatically and logically complete and independent. The conditional clause beginning with "if he is unable" is not logically connected with the first clause, but with the third. Hence there should be a semicolon or period after "standards"; but the comma after "first," because of the dependency of the second clause upon the third, is correct.

Here is the opposite fault—the "period fault":

As we continue we see the outlines of the Stevens Hotel, which is nearing completion. Massive and square with windows varying in size, reflecting the lights from the streets below.

Better: As we continue, we see the unfinished Stevens Hotel, massive and square in outline, with windows of varying size reflecting the lights from the streets below.

The part beginning "Massive and square . . ." was not regarded by the student who wrote it as an ellipsis (see page 160). He simply did not know the difference between a phrase and a predication. Another instance:

In my opinion he is not necessarily one of this pious type. Although I should expect him to know what the inside of a church is like.

Although, as we shall see later, is a subordinating conjunction expressing condition. The clause which it introduces leans, therefore, upon the preceding independent clause and should be separated from it by a comma:

In my opinion he is not necessarily one of this pious type, although I should expect him to know what the inside of a church is like.

We have already referred to the squinting construction which can be cleared up by the use of a comma. Note the following sentence:

Every snob is the same at heart, be she one type or another, she is merely in a different set of costumes, placed in a different setting.

If we make a full stop after "another" we have a fair sentence. But apparently the full stop was intended to occur after "heart." To indicate this and hence to overcome the "squint" we should place a semicolon at that point:

Every snob is the same at heart; be she one type or another, she is merely in a different set of costumes, placed in a different setting.

When an adjective phrase or clause or other modifier is necessary to identify the person or thing referred to, the modifier is called *restrictive* and no comma is used:

Words *which are learned early in life* acquire the greatest connotative value.

The *italicized* adjectival clause is *restrictive* because it points out or identifies the kind of words we mean. The which-clause is necessary to the meaning.

Latin and Greek derivatives, *usually learned from books,* have been called learned words.

The *italicized* participial phrase is *nonrestrictive* because it is merely an added modifying element and is not necessary to the sentence,—"derivatives," the subject, having already been identified by the use of the proper adjectives "Latin" and "Greek." It is set off by commas.

The dash—a mark of punctuation easily and frequently

abused—has two legitimate uses which need to be mentioned here. One use is that of setting off a parenthesis—as in the above sentence. The second use we have illustrated in the sentence immediately preceding: an afterthought or element not a part of the regular syntax is set off by a dash. Whether the dash sets off a parenthesis—and it takes two to do that—or whether it indicates that an afterthought has been added, it is the sign of broken syntax—of a break in logical sequence. The dash has a legitimate use in making meanings clear to the reader. But its too frequent use or incorrect use will, of course, obscure the meaning; or it may become an unpleasant mannerism.

While punctuation is on the whole a matter of logical structure and hence a factor in clearness, it is sometimes also a factor in securing emphasis upon certain ideas. Punctuation can be used to speed up the movement of a sentence or to retard it; it can be used to mark rhetorical pauses; it can be used to indicate the degree of remoteness of a parenthetical element; it can be used to call special attention to certain parts of the sentence; it can be used to indicate the emotion with which a sentence is spoken.

. . . When I go to the woods or the fields, or ascend to the hilltop, I do not seem to be gazing upon beauty at all, but to be breathing it like the air. I am not dazzled or astonished; I am in no hurry to look lest it be gone. I would not have the litter or debris removed, or the banks trimmed, or the ground painted. What I enjoy is commensurate with the earth and sky itself. It clings to the rocks and trees; it is kindred to the roughness and savagery; it rises from every tangle and chasm; it perches on the dry oak-stubs with the hawks and buzzards; the crows shed it from their wings and weave it into their nests of coarse sticks; the fox barks it, the cattle low it, but every mountain path leads to its haunts. I am not a spectator, but a participator in it. It is not an adornment; its roots strike to the centre of the earth.

—John Burroughs.

In the quoted paragraph it will be noticed that the speed of the sentence varies. Compare the two parts of this long sentence:

It [beauty] clings to the rocks and trees; it is kindred to the roughness and savagery; it rises from every tangle and chasm; it perches on the dry oak-stubs with the hawks and buzzards; the crows shed it from their wings and weave it into their nests of coarse sticks;

. . . the fox barks it, the cattle low it, and every mountain path leads to its haunts.

The movement of the first section is slow; that of the second is fast. To be sure, the first section is slowed up by the greater length of the clauses. Ordinarily a long clause, like a long freight-train, moves slowly. But an important factor in speed, or lack of it, is the pause. The longer the stops which a train has to make, the more its movement is retarded. A comma is a very short stop; a semicolon is a longer stop. A period is a stop-over. Note how we can change the speed:

. . . the fox barks it, the cattle low it, and every mountain path leads to its haunts.

. . . the fox barks it; the cattle low it; and every mountain path leads to its haunts.

. . . The fox barks it. The cattle low it. And every mountain path leads to its haunts.

Punctuation may be used to get the same effects as are secured by pauses in speech. In the following passage, written to imitate speech, the dashes are only partially logical. One indicates transposition (the word *alone* is transposed out of its normal order); the others indicate merely divisions between phrases, some of which would ordinarily not be marked at all. The dashes are used to get emphasis upon each condition as it is uttered:

Well, I should say that if a man were locked up all night with a corpse—alone—in a dark room—of a vacant house—with no

bed covers to pull over his head—and lived through it without going altogether mad, he might justly boast himself not of woman born . . . (Ambrose Bierce)

Just before it reached the house, the stream broke into two branches—shivered not a window there, but overwhelmed the whole vicinity, blocked up the road, and annihilated everything in its dreadful curse. (Hawthorne)

Shivered is in the same construction as *overwhelmed, blocked,* and *annihilated,* yet to get special emphasis upon the one fact so strangely different from the other facts, Hawthorne uses this rhetorical punctuation. By using the dash he draws special attention to a detail otherwise inconspicuous because in the middle of the sentence.

In the two following examples the punctuation is not logical at all, but it achieves a special rhetorical effect. *Tragic,* in the first example, not only occupies the end position, but the dash gives it added emphasis:

Please don't be so dreadfully stuffy and—tragic. (Katherine Mansfield)

The example which follows breaks up a logical context into fragments. This is the effect noticed in the sentence fragments given in preceding pages.

Out of that old man's consciousness it had departed. Amazingly. Like a dream dreamed out. (Wilbur Daniel Steele)

The use of the colon in the following construction is unusual and purely rhetorical. Ordinarily a comma would be used in such a construction:

His [The Chicagoan's] feet have not forgotten the feel of the rich loam: nor the greenness which comes forth from it. (Waldo Frank)

The comparative rhetorical effect of such marks as period, question mark, and exclamation point is so obvious that it need not be illustrated here. The substitution of

question mark or exclamation point after the sentence immediately preceding will show what is meant. The relative effects of various marks which may be used to set off appositives and parentheses will be noted briefly. Study the following:

Ah, and what did you gather from this allusion to a band—a speckled band? (A. Conan Doyle)

It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. (O. Henry)

Appositives are usually set off with commas. Setting off an appositive with dashes serves to emphasize it. In setting off parenthetical elements there are three degrees of separation possible, and they are indicated respectively by commas, dashes, and parentheses. If the inserted element is to be given much consideration by the reader it should not be marked as if remote from the main thought of the sentence:

Thus the chalk is no unimportant element in the masonry of the earth's crust, and it impresses a peculiar stamp, varying with the conditions to which it is exposed, on the scenery of the districts in which it occurs. (Huxley)

Now note how we change the effect:

Thus the chalk is no unimportant element in the masonry of the earth's crust, and it impresses a peculiar stamp—varying with the conditions to which it is exposed—on the scenery of the districts in which it occurs.

And again:

Thus the chalk is no unimportant element in the masonry of the earth's crust, and it impresses a peculiar stamp (varying with the conditions to which it is exposed) on the scenery of the districts in which it occurs.

The colon in modern usage is a mark of introduction. Therefore, while it has a logical value, it also has a rhe-

torical value, for it calls especial attention to that which follows. Note the effect of the colon in the following sentences:

Some faults were almost general among them: every one was pleased to hear the genius or knowledge of another depreciated. (Samuel Johnson)

Let us therefore at length cease to dispute and learn to live: throw away the encumbrance of precepts, which they who utter them with so much pride and pomp do not understand, and carry with us this simple and intelligible maxim: that deviation from Nature is deviation from happiness. (*Ibid.*)

At any rate one thing was certain: she might be Albert's wife, but she would always be Queen of England. (Lytton Strachey)

For in addition to his intellectual and moral qualities, he enjoyed, by virtue of his position, one supreme advantage which every other holder of high office in the country was without: he was permanent. (*Ibid.*)

EXERCISES IN PUNCTUATION

1. Study the punctuation of the following extracts. Account, so far as you can, from the point of view of clearness or of emphasis, for each mark used.

. . . Above the secretary hung a row of embossed portraits in one frame: Emerson, Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Bryant, Lowell, Whittier, equally complacent and almost equally muffled by untidy beards.

The great men, just beneath the ceiling, gazed across the room at a pair of enlarged pictures of Alwyn's grandparents in middle life: Rose Hamilton Tower's scarcely womanly head, the ash-blond hair combed back from her low forehead, her eyes unusually small, pale, and close together, her mouth drooping stoically; Henry Tower's face, stubborn and melancholy, his teeth set so firmly that the cheeks protruded a little over the jawbone, the chin lifted in a knot between the two tufts of his faded beard.

Though the heads within the identical frames were of the same size, one saw at a glance that this man was smaller than his wife.

—Wescott, *The Grandmothers.*

The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's square wall of a forehead, which had his eyebrows for its base, while his eyes found commodious cellarage in two dark caves, overshadowed by the wall. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's mouth, which was wide, thin, and hard-set. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's voice, which was inflexible, dry, and dictatorial. The emphasis was helped by the speaker's hair, which bristled on the skirts of his bald head, a plantation of firs to keep the wind from its shining surface, all covered with knobs, like the crust of a plum pie, as if the head had scarcely warehouse-room for the hard facts stored inside. The speaker's obstinate carriage, square coat, square legs, square shoulders,—nay, his very neckcloth, trained to take him by the throat with an unaccommodating grasp, like a stubborn fact, as it was,—all helped the emphasis.[1]

—Dickens, *Hard Times.*

2. Identify all restrictive and nonrestrictive phrases and clauses. Where the punctuation is incorrect, make the necessary alterations.

1. I started to obey but a sudden stiff breeze that had sprung up—you know how it is just before a bad storm—seized the large straw hat that I was wearing.

2. The part of the story which relates the struggles of the youth in the Civil War is full of that human touch, which grips the heart of the reader.

3. Why can't Galsworthy be a little more like Eugene O'Neill who is never tiresome?

4. An important character is Mrs. Travers who seems to be a strange creation of Conrad's ingenious mind; a woman,

[1] The character described is Mr. Gradgrind.

who is ready to defy all obstacles to follow her own inclinations.

5. Carved slabs of wood are the monuments which mark the last resting place of the men who felled the green giants of past years.

6. Lying on the ground near the ruined cook-house was the cracked bell, whose duty it was to summon the lumberjacks from the woods for their daily meals.

7. In *Justice* we have an individual who forges a check to obtain money, which will take him and his sweetheart to the colonies.

8. Men who don't know how to mend punctures will learn by following the directions here given.

9. All of the peach trees, having the advantage afforded by their position on the southern slope of the hill, were in full bloom.

10. The best example of an unhappy person, that I know of, is an old man of sixty, whom I met last year.

11. Ever since the amendment, sanctioning woman suffrage, was adopted, women have continued to lose interest in domestic things which formerly occupied their entire attention.

12. We could tie up at their private pier, instead of at the Yacht Club's dock which was overcrowded.

13. It was while we were camping that the hurricane, which completely destroyed Loraine, came.

14. I believe that one, going a journey alone, gains a freedom from annoying conversation which more than compensates for the possible pleasures of companionship.

15. In the headlines of nearly every paper we read the praises of some man, whose achievements have been of the first magnitude.

16. Often we read of the death of some famous singer, beauty, inventor, or prize-fighter who has died friendless and in utter poverty.

17. In direct speech and action Americans differ greatly from most all of the older nations who believe in the more formal and ceremonious conduct.

18. Indeed, the most important track meet, the Olympic

meet in which every important nation takes part, was first held in Athens, in the year 776 B.C.

19. It is necessary for the newspaper to please the readers who are its customers.

3. The sentences listed below are, except for the omission of marks of punctuation, written as they have appeared in print. Supply the missing punctuation. In some cases it may be necessary to turn to the Handbook for more detailed information than the rather general discussion in the preceding section will supply.

1. He was a good hater as all great men should be
2. When he says this he may give more pleasure to my friends than to me but I do not leave the theatre
3. As a professional dramatic critic he has been saying things for years and this book is a collection of his best bits.
4. When the hand of death was upon him he resigned without a murmur the office he had never sought
5. That utterance was not as some people supposed the reckless outburst of a foolish man
6. Oh Mr. Nathan you do say things
7. Like Lincoln he seemed to his contemporaries a rather absurd accident useful to some a convenient target for the wit of others and beneficent to all
8. Brave courageous statesmanlike a highly commendable utterance it seems to the Atlanta Journal
9. In October 1776 he sailed for France
10. No I'm not a member of the society for psychical research.
11. Well you've just come back!
12. He's a wizened quick-moving little old man with a nut brown nut cracker face and queer light blue eyes
13. I think my hurt was as great as the childs who recovered presently and was duly warned by her mother to feed no more deer
14. After all he said to his secretary I have been premier longer than I deserved
15. Three words said General Botha brought peace and union to South Africa Methods of barbarism

16. "Enough of this fooling" he said to Mr Balfour in an immortal scene in the House, perhaps unconsciously recalling another famous scene in Ely Cathedral, when the Reverend Mr Hytch was preaching and Cromwell rose and cried, "Cease your fooling and come down sir."

17. They were devoid of social grace, they were stupid, they were heavy as lead, they were bores.

18. "I can say exactly the opposite," he said in his intense emphatic way, "although it was a glorious afternoon, all this would mean nothing to me unless I believed that there were something behind."

19. He fanned it away, but it kept coming back, and in desperation he buttoned his coat over it.

20. There are octogenarians, nonagenarians, and even centenarians among literary periodicals, in whose honor on the score of longevity, the lace cap of a mere one year old should be doffed in all reverence; it is true, speaking reminiscently, we cant say as some of our aged contemporaries might, Before the war we discovered the literary masterpiece of this Don Fulano, nor can we venture very far into the less vague period of after the war, for the finding of such pleasurable experience.

21. They are utterly and absolutely wrong; politics will get them nowhere.

22. Economics doesnt sound like an interesting subject, however you would be surprised to find how enjoyable it is.

23. For a few minutes I was amazed at this action of the hind, then I noticed for the first time that the child was wearing a bright red jacket.

24. And now, we might ask ourselves, "What do we mean by the plays of Æschylus or Shakespeare or Sheridan?"

25. The basis for the proposal is to be found in these three considerations, that the principal obstacle to the economic recovery of Germany is the absence of a sound currency, that the provision of such a currency being intimately dependent on confidence in the issuers is an operation of peculiar difficulty for any German government, and finally that the issue of paper money is an exceedingly profitable business to the issuing parties.

26. The most important are the following, the sums owed to Germany by her former allies, the German colonies and state property there situated, state property in Alsace-Lorraine, German ships seized in enemy ports.

27. At a hotel where he was eating, a journalist, a correspondent for a New York paper, explained his difficulty to the head waiter.

GENERAL EXERCISES IN THE SENTENCE

1. Reconstruct these dissected sentences, paying especial attention to emphasis, clearness, and cadence:

A constructor of plays
Every leading writer of the imagination
Was
Except Marvell and Oldham
In some degree
Until the close of the century.

You will be sustained
If you succeed
If you fail
You will be disavowed

The light about him shot upward with the noise of a large splash
With terrible suddenness
Then all at once.

Wakefield lies down betimes
Or whatever it may be termed
And starting from his first nap
Almost repenting of his frolic
Spreads forth his arms into the wide and solitary waste of his unaccustomed bed.

2. The following sentences are illogical in that they express ambiguous, contradictory, or impossible ideas. Find the errors and correct them:

Large bright eyes danced about and peered over his rosy cheeks.

If your eyes change within six months time we will regrind them free of charge. (Advertisement for spectacles.)

A film spread itself before her eyes.

"The Gypsy" was perhaps the most peculiar story we read. This was brought about by the fact that the characters and setting were different.

He placed his arm on the mantle and hung his head over it. Then his chest started to rise and fall, in his emotion.

3. Examine these sentences for lapses in grammar and logical relationships; pay especial attention to faulty references:

Sometimes I set down, and try to work out the cipher.

And then I laid awake the rest of the night planning on future entertainments.

It would be nice if us two could go to Spring Lake.

The sheriff told him it would be very foolish to try, seeing that there was no train from Junction until the following Monday.

After that, we come upon an old deserted house.

There were some things Swinburne could do better than any one.

There is evidence that Molière was even called to the bar, but this did not last, for he soon gave way to his desire to go on the stage.

Jefferson was a great reader of religious books, and did so with a keen, critical mind.

All countries before the Great War had built up their peace strength, and also had a large number of others that they could call at any moment if it might be necessary.

"Bronze Age" and "Iron Age" are names given to periods of the earth's history, which shows that what is now known as chemistry has always played an important part in the development of civilization.

Although there are adolescent youths reading the papers, they are published for mature minds.

Everyone seems to have slight differences in their conceptions of poetry.

If nations can progress without woman's legislative assistance why should they be given a part in politics?

In the *Silver Box* it shows how too much money can spoil a son.

Roundabout is nothing but a great plain, dotted here and there with a farmhouse—half of which are unoccupied.

He doesn't go out of his way to help anyone who can help themselves.

He doesn't make a big outward show of religion or say that a person is bad because they don't do exactly as he does.

4. (a) The student who wrote the following sentence had some sense for strength and climax; but he tried too hard, and overdid himself. Analyze the fault and correct it:

> The man who is able to analyze his social environment is indeed to be congratulated; but the man who is able to go still further and suggest a workable solution to the difficulties found in his analysis is indeed a wizard—yes, he is a demi-god.

(b) The following sentence is incoherent, muddled both in construction and in meaning. Can you do anything with it?

> Robbery is severely hated by all of the good men of the day, and if Christianity had not started this then indeed no one would be able to have possessions of his own.

5. The following sentences contain examples of incorrect parallelism. Make desirable corrections:

All I remember of Mrs. MacAnder is that she was little, wiry, a cook for Timothy, and talked a lot.

George Forsyte was of medium height, rather heavy and had a happy and contented disposition.

Madame Ranevskanya is the kind of woman who has been pampered and frivolous in her childhood.

He was kept busy waiting on table, scrubbing floors, washing dishes, and all sorts of odd jobs.

Virginia, pretty, blond hair, blue eyes, tall and graceful, was a striking looking girl.

She watched her grandfather with eyes which flashed with

interest and marvelled at his skill in making her dolly just as good as ever.

6. Overuse of the passive verb has a tendency to weaken a style. In the following sentences, try changing the passive construction to the active, and note the effect:

We opened the door, and a very curious sight met our eyes.

I was told of an extraordinary view that could be obtained from a certain mountain top.

Scattered houses could be seen lining the network of roads.

Through the car windows could be seen a hustle for seats.

In the foreground, a strip of land not more than a quarter of a mile in width was seen.

7. "Beware of bombast," says Anatole France. Beware, indeed, of any kind of expression that is artificial and merely "rhetorical." The following is an example of middle-eighteenth-century affectation, of a type that good writers nowadays avoid. Study the extract, and rewrite it:

That he [a certain actor] often deserves all the applause a favorable audience may bestow, will not be denied; . . . that he always deserves it, is a question: That he is a great genius, is allowed . . . But that judgment does not always direct his spirit, will not sure be thought too bold an affectation . . .

—Cibber, *History of the Stage.*

8. These sentences are stringy and involved, with the repetitious, verbose effects which are so often an accompaniment of bad writing. Note that the punctuation is often faulty. Rewrite them:

"Glad to see you if it is only for a week-end," said Bill Grant, a retired judge of a small town that was adjacent to an Indian reservation, to John MacKay, a business man from the city who made a practice of coming to this town once or twice a month for a little rest.

The unremembered millions that have been the victims of nature's simple demands that the species be perpetuated, that the earth be cultivated for the sustainment of life,

and that human matter be fodder for more human matter, must present a picture to the active mind that will quicken its instinct to preserve its curiosity against the subtle attempts of nature to pervert it; or more properly, I should say, the attempt to force it into a primitive channel.

He had about five miles to go yet, and chores to do when he got home for he lived on a small farm where he divided his interest with the mill in town, where he ran a planer, for neither the farm nor the town job would alone support his family.

As he was meditating, hoping and driving he crossed a small bridge, but he saw it in time to apply the brakes, which he did almost instinctively, for once he had come upon it in a considerable hurry when he was lost in thought and its rigid shoulders did not yield to the momentum of the car with the consequent result that he burst a tire, threw part of his load out of the car, and nearly loosened all the joints in his neck.

In the meantime Charles Hornblower has heard the story through the Hillcrest agent and in a frenzy of rage rushes to the Hillcrest home, but Chloe, who has learned that he has heard, reaches there first, and old Hillcrest like a true gentleman has agreed to tell him a fictitious tale. Charles comes in as Chloe leaves; she listens at a window, and hears that he is not convinced.

9. The following sentences are poorly constructed. So recast them that important predications are made to stand out and unimportant elements are properly subordinated. If subordinating conjunctions are used, be sure in each case that the conjunction has the correct shade of meaning.

1. As the old channel changed every year I had orders to take great care in following the deepest one as there were several entrances or mouths of the river.

2. It was decided that the next summer I should attend a military camp, which I did, but the going was too rough

for me and my health broke down and I was forced to return home before the term of camping was over.

3. The story is about a young seaman, and he lived in a house reputed to be haunted.

4. Figaro loves Susana, maid of the Countess, and who is also the object of the ever changeable affections of the count.

5. Mr. de la Mare is a man about five feet tall, with black hair, a dark complexion, and rather well proportioned.

6. Housewives formerly did not have hired help and as many mechanical conveniences.

7. A paragraph is a group of sentences which are closely related, and all of the ideas expressed in these sentences tend to clarify one main thought.

8. A novel is a combination of characters, setting, and experiments in structure, and which shows a careful study of some phase of real life.

9. *My Antonia* is a character sketch, but it seems that Miss Cather is just relating events without having much of a plot to work on.

10. Yes, you are the kind of person who enjoys the outdoors in the summer, for Aunt Evelyn has mentioned it often in her letters how well you liked outdoor life.

11. Then too his grip was upstairs, so he could not leave without it, for it contained hundreds of dollars worth of valuable silver ware.

12. He came with very good recommendations and changed schools often, and the professors thought this was because he was in such great demand and so much sought after.

13. The tables are well placed and this gives the diners as much privacy as is possible in a public dining room.

14. Men formed groups so enthusiastic had they become over this literature, and studied it at the same time mixing it with humanism all of which produced a special cult of learning.

15. The literature of Italy was read frequently in France, and many Frenchmen traveled in Italy as well as the influx of many Italian men of letters into France.

16. The setting sun was at my back and it cast a peculiar bluish glint over the mountain peaks.

17. A dishonest student may "get by" his professors during the exams and to some extent through the semester by bluffing, but his fellow students can generally pick him out as he frequently does his dishonest work so that they may see him, thinking that they will believe him clever for being able to crib or do something else which is not honest when a teacher is around.

10. State what the grammatical and rhetorical faults are in each of the following sentences; then revise and correct. Note: In some cases nothing is wrong but the punctuation.

1. When the war came he left a will in Rosamond's favor and was killed in France.

2. Anglo-Saxon words were the first learned as children, and consequently they are the most forceful to us.

3. The modern child often does not consider his parents his social equals and consequently is reluctant to acknowledge them in the presence of his friends, especially if they are not well clothed.

4. One morning as Major Pendennis sat down to his breakfast at his club in Pall Mall, he discovered in his mail two letters of special interest and at the same time very annoying.

5. On the way we stopped and secured a well digger, an implement like a fence post digger, and which worked like an auger.

6. It is the man with courage, self-reliance and dependability, and who says do it who will be a true success.

7. Some of these took the fatal news with heads up and calmly.

8. Caring little for educational systems, he taught his children poetry and history and ~~to speak the truth.~~ truthfulness

9. When our bus stopped at the curb, we climbed to the upper deck. I went up first, Bob next, and the stranger following.

10. You come to college to learn not to go to parties.

11. No one likes to have it said of them that they were dismissed for lack of proper marks.

12. In my college life I don't hardly believe a day passes but what I hear and notice at least one error in grammar.

13. I had the desire to always attempt to say what I had to say in the best possible way with the least possible mistakes.

14. Unquestionably the most successful sport writers play upon the spicy slang phrase.

15. He learns of the ways and customs of foreign students, which helped make him a success in later life.

16. Other advantages of the fraternity are many, for example, in extra-curricular activities, when the competition is keen and persistent, my brothers will push and goad me on should defeat come.

17. Rosa was handicapped by the loss of her mother, who had trained and influenced her but little, and a very brutal father.

18. When the width of the continent can be travelled in sixteen hours, across the Atlantic in twenty-six hours, and around the world in twenty-four days by airplane, their importance is significant.

19. The plot of *The Silver Box* is well built and it appeals to us because we feel that the case of money buying justice is too often the case in our American courts.

20. All the pleasure that there is in hearing new facts is marred by taking full notes, which is compulsory.

21. The supply department takes care that proper towels are used which will not cause eye trouble, sanitary floor dressing, soap, and towels are also taken care of by this department.

22. I know there are people who think they have worries but in reality *they* are petty problems compared to those of others.

23. The life of the average well-to-do farmer has advantages over the city family of the same means.

24. The city dweller is shut up in an apartment or owns a home which is so close to his neighbors that they could almost reach out of their windows and shake hands.

25. You are confronted with the question if our prisons are adequately fitted for reforming others beside hardened criminals.

26. His dialogue reflects the character of his figures and in a few pages you learn to know them quite well, which is only accomplished by reading a well written play.

27. I must learn how to care for the sick and render them the necessary care, but the proper methods can only be learned at school.

28. The dogs bark and fight outside where they are tied to a long wire; the air is foul and impure in the cabin, because the oil stove was left burning all night; the mountaineers began chanting to the spirit of a departed friend or relative in the middle of the night, which is, indeed, trying.

29. Jack Berthwick stole his young lady escort's purse while drunk.

30. Poetry is the product of an emotional mood of a thinker, so charged with emotion that it demands rhythmical expression.

31. But we as a rule do not give those who have broken the law a chance, for once they become a criminal they are always kept a criminal.

32. In reading *The Octopus,* although one has to wait a long while for any action or purpose to become evident, once the rising action begins, it mounts steadily to the climax.

33. Being a warm day, as I have stated, the hired men were out in the fields plowing.

34. The attitude the individual takes is of utmost importance for it is possible to be contented and find happiness in the little things as well as the big things in our lives instead of wishing for things we cannot have.

35. De Levis reports to his host that a thousand pounds in bank notes have been stolen from him while he was out of his room for fifteen minutes and his wallet stuffed with paper.

36. De Levis suspects Captain Dancy of the theft, as he had shown that he was hard up for money by betting on parlor tricks.

37. Virtue will not vanish because it is immortal.

38. When the occupants of the yacht were marooned on

the island one of them possessed qualities superior to his companions and he became leader.

39. Conrad's representation of the water at the Shore of Refuge is quite analogous to the sea enveloping Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

40. Simply because a man has studied much engineering, because he is a capable physician, or because he is a worthy mechanic, does not signify that he is an intelligent voter.

41. After flunking three times, the professor called me to his office.

42. "Say, friend, how far is it into the city from where this ferry lands?" he asked a young man in a straw hat wearing a blue and white striped necktie who stood beside him.

43. These are the kind of shoes worn by people who climb mountains in British Columbia. They appear rather formidable and they were photographed in a camp in that province.

44. Robert Henderson had the privilege of creating the title-rôle of Busoic, which he is again playing in the present production, during its original performance two seasons ago at Gloucester, Massachusetts, under the personal direction of the author.

45. Another reason why he experiments in a new system of education is because he wants his son to be educated as a noble.

46. The next step in the boiling process is when the liquor is pumped into the pots.

47. His long slender hands continued to passively turn the pages from which he read.

48. The sweet-toned Amati has had to modestly step aside.

49. It is very few indeed that one feels free to share the sadder things of life.

50. This decline is due to the fusion of education and the reduced cost of travel and the awakening of social consciousness.

51. She is called by many the modern Florence Nightingale and an account of her work certainly reads like a fairy tale

since it seems impossible that one woman could accomplish so much.

52. Without any comparison, however, she (Fazenda) is the most original, daring, and of the most flashing intelligence of any girl in the movies.

53. We entered the house and soon a light was to be seen going from room to room.

54. Holding their breath, the car was driven across.

55. In attempting to secure the jar, it slipped, fell, and was broken upon the cement floor.

56. The teacher who labors day after day trying to teach the student to speak grammatically correct, often finds his efforts useless.

57. I admire an author who attempts to deal with complex problems so common in our present-day life such as O'Neill deals with them in *Desire under the Elms*.

Take Done book for synonyms.
Roget's Thesaurus

Chapter VII

WORDS

The way to learn to use words is to read some good literature often and carefully, intensively, not extensively.—BERTRAND RUSSELL.

I have fallen in love with the simplest way of writing, doing exactly what you want to do, with the phrases of daily life for your sole instrument.—WALTER RALEIGH.

Words, words, words, bemoaned the sorrow-stricken Dane, with his artistic intuition that there were too many of them—words cheap and hollowly clever. But much of the traffic of this life is carried on by words, and one has to wake up to a considerable knowledge of them before existence in its full intensity can be realized.—J. H. PRESTON.

SOCRATES. *I mean an intelligent word graven in the soul of the learner, which can defend itself, and knows when to speak and when to be silent.*
PHÆDRUS. *You mean the living word of knowledge which has a soul, and of which the written word is properly no more than an image?*
SOCRATES. *Yes, of course that is what I mean.*—PLATO.

I

WORDS AND THINKING

CARE in the use of words goes hand in hand with right thinking. Those who love exact truth instinctively reject expression which is not also exact. In his *Master Builder,* Ibsen makes Solness say to Hilda Wangel, "Have you loved any one in all these years?" She does not answer, and he repeats, "Have you loved any one in all these years?" The girl, who has been faithful to him since their first meeting, replies, "Have I loved any one *else* you mean?" And later, Miss Wangel speaks of what will happen "when you move into your new *home.*" It is now Solness who is meticulous as to accurate meanings. "Into my new *house,*" he corrects, "it will never be *home.*"

It was this habit of close thinking in language that had much to do with Ibsen's great success as a writer.

Coleridge, who insisted on "perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning," placed emphasis on the "moral and intellectual importance of habituating ourselves to a strict accuracy of expression," and directly connected grammar and logic with purity of expression. Training in word values becomes with him a vital factor in the process of learning to think. "Much," he says, "may be effected by education. I believe not only from grounds of reason, from having in great measure assured myself of the fact by actual though limited experience, that to a youth led from his boyhood to investigate the meaning of every word and the reason of its choice and position, logic presents itself as an old acquaintance under new names."[1] Here is a thoroughly true statement of a fact that should be of great concern not only to every student who would write and talk well, but to every one who would think well. As Hugh Blair expressed it, "True rhetoric and sound logic are very nearly allied. The study of arranging and expressing our thoughts with propriety teaches us to think as well as to speak accurately."[2]

II

Learning to Use Words

But once agreed as to the value of using words effectively, how shall we go about it? It may be remarked by way of preface that it takes time to become a master of words. There are upwards of 450,000 English words listed in the *New Oxford Dictionary,* but no one person has ever learned to use all of them. Indeed, it is not the number of words a writer uses, but the artistry with which

[1] *Beauties of Wordsworth's Poetry.*
[2] *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres,* p. 12.

he employs them to express his meaning that counts. Robert Browning used over 35,000 different words in his poems, 38,000 if we include the proper names, Shakespeare only 15,000, yet no one would call Browning the greater poet.[1] The true test is to use just the right word in the right place; and to do this we must so far as possible make this rich depository of symbols our own to call upon at will for exactly the words we want, so combined as most precisely to express our meaning.

Investigating Meanings.—Perhaps the first thing to do is to follow the advice of Coleridge: investigate the meaning of every word with which we come in contact. This, let it be remembered, is not so impossible a task as it may sound. The average college freshman has been in school twelve years. There are three hundred and sixty-five days in a year. By learning one new word a day for, say, ten of these years in school, this freshman could have mastered approximately thirty-five hundred words. And in four years more he could reach an equivalent of one-fourth of Shakespeare's entire vocabulary. This would assume, too, that he started with nothing, which would not be true, for a child of six or seven probably knows from 500 to 1500 words, depending on his natural aptitude and mental alertness. This, of course, is a hypothetical case, but it does show how reasonable it would be to assume that a boy entering college should know thoroughly, both as to meaning and use, at least from three to five thousand serviceable words, and to expect this same boy leaving college four years later to know from ten to fifteen hundred more.

But some people have been so mentally lazy that they are really never sure of any word. They have read not attentively, but carelessly, listlessly skimming the surface

[1] This count is according to Professor Armstrong's students at Waco, Texas, as reported by Professor Phelps in *Scribner's Magazine* for July, 1926.

of an essay or novel, rather than plunging into it wholeheartedly to extract its full meaning and beauty; and in their speaking and writing they have been equally lax. Never holding themselves to anything precise and accurate, they have fallen into slipshod methods of expression, which are destructive alike to good thinking and good writing.

Making Words One's Own—The Dictionary and Other Helps.—Learning the meanings of new words is really great fun, and it is more fun to learn to use them. It is wonderful, too, how one's intellectual horizons expand in this dual process. Perhaps the best way to enlarge our vocabulary is to read much and intensively. In careful reading, the context often helps explain a new expression, though one may be easily deceived here. The safest way is to read with a dictionary always at hand. Webster's *New International, The New Standard,* Winston's *Simplified,* or the *Oxford Dictionary,* probably in the popular desk editions, should be on every student's table.

It is seldom, however, that merely to look up a word will make it one's own; it must be reviewed in the mind, written down, used. The very muscular process of verbalizing either in written or oral form will do more than any other one thing to engrave a word on the memory. Some students keep a note-book for new words learned, a most excellent practice, though the better way is to incorporate the new word at once into one's writing and speaking vocabulary.

In writing, Roget's *Thesaurus,* a treasury of English words listed according to relationship, similarity, and dissimilarity in meaning, will often help in finding the exact word required. And there are various other books of such nature which are of great use to those who wish to increase their working vocabulary. Of such works Crabb's *Dictionary of Synonyms,* March's *Thesaurus Dictionary of the English Language,* Fernald's *English Synonyms, An-*

tonyms, and Prepositions, and Smith's *Synonyms Discriminated* may be mentioned as among the most useful. For the study of words in relationship to other words, and for a general reference work on good usage, such a work as Fowler's *Dictionary of English Usage* is invaluable.

The remarkable young poet, Nathalia Crane, who at thirteen years of age has written two books of excellent verse, is devoted to her dictionaries. Mr. James Young, writing in the *New York Times Magazine,* tells us that visiting Miss Crane's home, he found that "four dictionaries lying on the floor near the bookcase were the object of her particular interest." "The little girl sat cross-legged beside a big dictionary and told how she always looked up unfamiliar words," Mr. Young relates. The four dictionaries occupy much of her time:

> I read them for hours (said Nathalia). They have so many fine words I never heard before, words that make me want to know them and love them. Yes, I love words, sweet words and noble words, too, because each word has a soul. How do I know that? Why I just feel it. They come to me and I get to know them, like precious friends. Why shouldn't they have souls?

This, of course, is the testimony of one with a natural passion for words—such as poets often have. But one need not be a poet to find the dictionary a fascinating book. Any one who has allowed himself even a few moments a day for browsing in his Webster, or Standard, or Oxford will testify to that. We do not as a rule read the dictionary for pleasure, however; we turn to it as a practical help in our reading and writing. As such we find it highly useful, not only as an aid in immediate difficulties but as a means to a broader education. Not only will new words open up entirely new horizons, but old words will be seen in fresh and enlarged meanings. Until an idea has been put into words, it can hardly be called an idea: to all intents and purposes, it really does not exist; for until the

word is found, one cannot even express his idea to himself. The discovery of new words thus often goes hand in hand with the discovery of new ideas.

Guarding Against Wrong Uses.—Yet a word of caution is in order to those who use the dictionary in writing. Unless extreme care is exercised, any one of such reference works as have been mentioned may prove to be a detriment rather than a help. In the dictionary, for instance, many meanings will usually be found for one word. Some of these apply in one context, some in another,—every one who has studied a foreign language knows how easy it is to apply the wrong meaning. It is quite as easy to be mistaken in English. Some meanings are obsolete or archaic; some are colloquial; some are rare, some proper only in a special context. The proper use of the dictionary is a whole study in itself. A student should very early learn all the signs and abbreviations, like *prov., colloq., obs., a., adv., vt., vi., t.,* etc.; for it is necessary to know whether a word is a noun, an adjective, or a verb, and whether it is in reputable and present use. He should also become practiced in studying the different forms of words—in their different numbers, tenses, persons, and so forth. And he should accustom himself to the varied connotations of words in different contexts, always keeping his eyes open for new words in new uses. The study of markings for pronunciation is another matter, and need not be considered here.

A thesaurus offers particular dangers, in that words only, and not meanings and contexts, are given, and the unwary student is likely to be misled by an apparent synonym into some egregious blunder. Now it is not easy to substitute one word for another. There is indeed but one safe method in using any word, and that is to know its varied connotations and to study it as it is customarily used in context.

A careful study of all that is given under each word, in the larger dictionaries especially, will help clear meanings, as will cross-reference from dictionary to thesaurus, from thesaurus to dictionary. But casual, hasty glances are often deceptive and often lead the incautious student astray. This is particularly true in cases where a writer deliberately sets out to use new words, and does not guard himself sufficiently against mistakes.

New words should indeed be used; but always with proper caution. Good rules are these: "Never use a new expression of whose direct meaning and connotation you are not sure," and "Never use a new word simply for the sake of using it." Those who run about eagerly looking for new words to furbish up their style, and use these words, when found, without knowledge, become worthy of such caustic reproofs as this of Ben Jonson's:

> She is like one of your ignorant poetasters of the time, who, when they have got acquainted with a strange word, never rest until they have wrung it in, though it loosen the whole fabric of their sense.
>
> —*Cynthia's Revels, Act II.*

To show how students, even of sophomore standing, can err in this respect, it is only necessary to read a few of their themes. The sentences given below are illustrative of some of the unhappy results of a combination of muddy thinking and big unfamiliar words:

> That strange, weird longing for that sublime, iridescent, and soul-satisfying thirst for the true conception of happiness is only found in doing deeds or accomplishments which require effort on our part.

> Soon they see the reflection of their work shining forth as a radiant image satisfying their thirst and longings.

> I think that a government is in a decided advantageous position in aiding its citizens to be propitious. A government can bring

about happiness by passing well thought-out laws, because of the large amount of egregious prestige and the respect it instills in the hearts of the people.

The Criterion of Usage—Practice and the Dictionary. —The fact is, words are extremely sensitive to the company they keep, and take on different colors under different associations. That is why one often finds in the dictionary a list of two or three or a dozen meanings under one word. Thus, in the *Desk Standard Dictionary* the verb *vary* is assigned eleven separate uses, five under transitive (*t.*) and six under intransitive (*i.*). Moreover, one of these meanings is in the special field of music (*Mus.*), one in the special field of mathematics (*Math.*). In the same way *organ* is given four meanings; *kick,* six—one of these is technical and British, [(*Eng.*) *Football*], another is slang and American (*Slang, U. S.*); and *liquid,* seven,—five as an adjective, two as a noun. The little word *key,* however, is followed by an imposing array of fourteen distinctive uses, including one specially applicable to mechanics (*Mech.*), another to masonry (*Masonry*), one to carpentry (*Carp.*), one to electricity (*Elec.*), and still another to music (*Mus.*), which in turn is divided into two parts.

Now, one could memorize many such facts, and still know little about actually using words. The dictionary lists words, even gives sentences in which they occur; and as in the case of the marvelous *New Oxford Dictionary* may go so far as to present a complete history of the use of the word. But not all this can give one the truest sense for a word in its various accepted contexts; this can come only through familiarity with written and spoken language as it is used by the masters. Thus we learn to use words, first of all by listening carefully to good speaking whenever we can hear it, and through much intensive, observant reading of good literature.

This is not to discount the importance of continuous use of the dictionary, and such other helps as collections of synonyms and antonyms and a thesaurus may offer. But the point that needs to be made clear is that the usage of good writers and speakers furnishes the only true standard for acceptable meanings and acceptable combinations of words. Even the dictionary, especially where first-hand information is available, should take its proper subordinate place. The dictionary, like the grammar, should be used as a reference work to supplement the great textbook of practice. The dictionary represents the combined labors of many hundreds of men for many years in a collaborative undertaking to furnish authentic data on this very question of what is and what is not good form as shown in the usage of the best writers and speakers. As such, it will be found to contain much priceless information, and through intelligent study of it we can greatly extend our practical knowledge of our language.

Specific Uses for the Dictionary.—Let us suppose, for example, that a student has used the word *suspicion* as a verb, in such a sentence as "I suspicioned all was not well." He looks at the word and is not sure about it: has he really ever seen it used that way? He goes to the dictionary, and there he finds *suspicion* listed as a noun (*n.*), but not as a verb (*v.*). *Suspect* he finds is the right verb to use; so he crosses out the *suspicioned* and substitutes *suspected,* and in so doing is saved from committing an impropriety. An *impropriety* is the incorrect use of one part of speech for another. This is one of the most common and insidious of all errors.

Or let us imagine that the student has just written emphatically that, "Irregardless of consequences, the council should protest the action of the Board." Feeling some doubt as to irregardless, he turns to the *ir's,* and runs down the list, only to find that his word is not there. Again he is spared the embarrassment of a serious error in

usage; he has discovered that *irregardless* is one of those expressions like *ain't, dark-complected,* and *enthuse,* which inexpert writers and speakers sometimes try to use, but which have really never been accepted into the language. We call words like this which are not in the language *barbarisms.*

And so this young man might go on investigating, correcting, corroborating. He might, for instance, turn again to his dictionary to make sure of his use of *laying* in the sentence, "I was laying on my bunk at the time," and find that he was incorrectly using the participle of the transitive verb *lay,* in place of the participle of the intransitive verb *lie.* The sentence should have read, "I was *lying* in my bunk at the time." Or he has written, "Henry was sort of tired that evening," and wants to verify the phrase *sort of* as an adverb, only to discover that it is not listed as such. Thinking up another word, he hits upon *somewhat,* and, just to be certain, looks it up, finding it marked, securely enough, as an adverb (*adv.*). The student can thus avoid grammatical errors, or *solecisms,* as they are often called.

A good student will go on using his dictionary not one day, nor a week, but year after year, just as long as he is really interested in learning his language; for to learn one's language well is the labor of a lifetime.

III

Denotation in Words

Connotation is a general term used to describe the suggestive elements of a word or phrase as distinguished from its *denotation.* Most words may be said to have it in them both to *denote* and to *connote* meanings. The noun *grass,* for example, is a word which in plain mathematical terms denotes a certain green plant which covers our fields

and yards and parks in summer time and upon which cattle feed. But its connotation is quite different: it will, according to one's experiences, call to mind pleasant spring days, softness, brightness, out-of-doors, delightful seasons of loafing, tender memories of all sorts. Likewise, the word *tree* denotes in its most common meaning the perennial woody plant with which we are familiar. The quick imagination of Joyce Kilmer, however, saw the tree as a thing more lovely than a poem, a beautiful child of the earth rising upward to lift her arms to pray, wearing a nest of robins in her hair.

Accurate Denotations.—To learn to use words with proper regard to their suggestive values is the highest accomplishment in writing, and liberal space will presently be given in this chapter to a consideration of the problem of connotation in language. But for everyday purposes it is even more essential to learn to use words of exact denotation. Using words in their right connotation is a step toward making one's language forceful and literary, but using words in their right denotation is necessary to make one's writing understood.

In his *Anatole France Himself*, J. J. Brousson relates a delightful incident showing France's sensitive attitude in the matter of right words. Monsieur France has been called "distracted" by his servant. He is quite upset by the woman's inaccurate use of the word. "Monstrous," he cries, and lifts his hands to heaven. "I am not distracted, but abstracted," he declares. And as he walks with his secretary he treats this individual to a "minute philological disquisition on abstracted and distracted."

> Every man who is distracted is abstracted, but by no means all abstracted men are distracted. The abstracted man pursues one idea—his idea: the distracted man pursues a thousand—that is to say, none. The abstracted man is absorbed by his internal life and sees nothing of the external world: the gaze of the distracted man

flits over everything and distinguishes nothing—he is in a maze. The distracted man is without common sense. The abstracted man may have genius.

To develop something of this fine sense for exact meaning in the use of words should be the goal of every educated man or woman. But a student who spoke of a production of *Gammer Gurton's Needle,* in a criticism for his college daily, as a highly *credible* performance had not acquired such a sense. Nor has the writer or speaker who carelessly uses *aggravate* when he means *exasperate, irritate,* or *provoke; tasteful* when he means *tasty; effect* when he means *affect; suspect* when he means *imagine,* and so on through a long possible list.

Something will be said in the chapter on Description about precision in words used to describe actions, and the frequent necessity of making choice of the exact word needed from a long list of near synonyms—"near synonyms," for as Anatole France somewhere insists, "there is no such thing as a real synonym." What is said there applies of course to all writing. Under the word *delightful,* Roget lists as synonyms, *charming, felicitous, exquisite, lovely, ravishing, rapturous, heartfelt, thrilling, ecstatic, beatific, empyrean, Elysian,* etc. But one would not choose among these indiscriminately. A *heartfelt sunset,* for instance, would immediately appear ridiculous, as would a *beatific picnic,* but neither would be more incongruous with the meaning intended than the phrase *egregious prestige* in the sentence quoted on page 266. The student who wrote this was evidently in search of a synonym for *great* or *extraordinary;* he looked in his thesaurus, and finding *egregious* in the same column, straightway used it as a literary equivalent. Here is a case where the thesaurus failed, though a careful reference to his dictionary would have prevented the error. Much more might be added upon this point of exact usage, but perhaps enough has

been said to show the importance of infinite care in choosing words; enough, also, to suggest that the whole problem of using the exact word reduces itself largely to a matter of such intelligent observation of good writing and speaking, such constant exercise of good judgment, as to lead to a gradual development of a language sense that instinctively knows what is right.

Confusing Words—Malapropisms.—An all too prevalent fault with inexpert writers is to confuse words of somewhat similar sound, or otherwise to use expressions in an entirely wrong sense. Half-educated people who wish to make a show of knowledge or who are simply blithely ignorant of close distinctions make egregious blunders of this type, and observant writers have capitalized the fault to the end of some perennially amusing scenes in comedy. Mrs. Malaprop, sailing gaily and conversationally through Sheridan's *The Rivals,* grandly dropping by the way her delectable pearls of worldly wisdom about "contagious countries," "allegories on the banks of the Nile," and so on, has given a name to this type of error—*Malapropism.* In *Much Ado About Nothing* Shakespeare had already made Dogberry unforgettable with his amusing perversions of language. It was he who invented the diverting phrase "odorous comparisons." "We are not to examination these men," the good constable declares of his prisoners. "Our watch hath comprehended two aspicious persons"; "get a learned writer to set down our excommunication"; "it shall be suffigance"; "dost thou not suspect my place? dost thou not suspect my years?" are others of his choice expressions. And perhaps most comical of all is his "O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this!" Over and over, wherever he is portraying over-pretentious, half-ignorant people, Shakespeare thus satirizes abuse of language. In doing this he is but calling attention to what had already been condemned by our earliest rhetoricians, by Sir

Thomas Wilson, for instance, who in his *Arte of Rhetorique,* speaks roundly against the folly of pretentious and ignorant diction. Some of his illustrations amusingly suggest the prevalence of the fault in his day, as may be seen from the following: "Thou ingrame and vacation knave, if I take thee any more within the circumcision of my dampnation.—I will so corrupt thee that all other vacation knaves shall take il sample by thee."

Children frequently confuse words of like sound. P. C. Wren has recently illustrated this tendency in his *Beau Geste.* In an imitation naval battle, John Geste has received a small bullet in the hip. Michael (the captain) prepares to extract the ball, whereupon:

"Going to cauterize the wound and prevent its turning *sceptic?*" inquired the Lieutenant.

"No," replied the Captain. "Naval surgery without *æsthetics.* . . . Cut out the cannon-ball."

It is not at all strange that children make such blunders —many of our words do sound alike—so much alike, indeed, that it is only through years of conscious discriminating attention that one can learn the essential distinctions. How treacherous language can be in this respect may be illustrated by these sentences from the themes of college students:

"Stories were read and *antidotes* told until bed-time."

"This had its root in a small group of poets *imbibed* with the humanistic spirit."

"After this Hawthorne went into *solution* for some time." (The reference is to his retiring for privacy in order to write.)

"Features which probably *attributed* mostly to this condition were. . . ."

Near Malapropisms—Wrong Contexts.—Malapropisms usually result from confusing words of similar sound. A near malapropism occurs where words which are of

similar meaning but which require different context are confused. Examples are: "Plays that cater to the sex appeal. . . ." "His appetite was *enhanced* by this vigorous exercise." Plays may make an appeal by catering to a sex interest, and the value of food may become enhanced in the eyes of a hungry man, but nothing caters to an appeal, and *enhanced* cannot be applied to an appetite. This use of words in wrong connections is as distressing as discords in music. *Enhance* literally means to *increase,* to *enlarge,* but the boy who spoke of *enhancing* an appetite really said a ludicrous thing, as did another who wrote, "Red Grange delivered ice to enhance his strength for fall football." Certain qualities may be *enhanced,* but not strength. The beauty of a landscape may be enhanced through memories and associations. The value of a college education may become enhanced in a man's eyes, through a year's suspension, and so on. It is distinctly a case where context must be considered before literal meanings. This word *enhanced,* incidentally, is frequently misused; it is worth studying.

IV

Connotation in Words—Suggestive Language

"When you come to think of it," writes Turgeniev in *Spring Freshets,* "there is nothing in the world more potent—and more impotent—than words." In the effort to communicate ideas there is always, one may safely say, a certain amount of residue—something left over, something not quite successfully conveyed. Herein lies the impotence of words. And here is the battlefield: On one side the elusiveness and intangibility of personality, emotion, thought; on the other the imperfect sensitivity and resisting power of human perception; and, in between, the

genius of language gallantly maneuvering to surmount the barriers to unimpeded human intercourse.

It is not strange that the obstacles to complete communication are so seldom overcome. The real cause for wonder is that mankind has learned to do so much with words, especially in the way of expressing the subtler shades of thought and feeling. Plain matters of fact are not difficult to put into language. It is, for example, easy to say, "The home is without books." And it is not much more difficult to give the general effect such a home may have upon us, as in "A home without books is distressing." But to find a way to convey the more specific emotional reaction such a condition produces, the feeling of gloom and depression or whatever it may be, is less simple; in fact, it cannot be directly expressed; it can at best be only suggested. "A home without books is like a house without windows," says Henry Ward Beecher, in an attempt to put into language his own peculiar impression of this situation; and in so doing he has effectively suggested the isolation and mental darkness of an illiterate home.

Poetry owes its force to a combination of musical with highly suggestive language. In fact, the music of verse itself may be thought of largely as an element of suggestive language, for the full effect of a word, or of words in combination can never be divorced from sound. But, however we may analyze it, suggestive language when carried to its height in our best poetry has power to arouse in us ideas and feelings that seem like shadows of our deepest selves and our most intense experiences. Thus in the section on the retreat from Spain in the *Song of Roland* there is a description of mountains which awakens in a remarkable way the vague dangers and terrors that lie sleeping in our minds, reminiscent, as it were, of older racial experiences, when our ancestors battled with encompassing hosts in treacherous mountain passes.

High are the hills and dark the valleys, brown are the rocks and dread the defiles.

This is pure suggestion; the impression is almost perfect and it is secured in very few words. Of equal suggestive power are those marvelous lines in Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* which stir to life haunting intimations of shadowy pasts and remote mysterious places:

> Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

Words are suggestive because of their absorbent power. Nearly all words are suggestive to some degree, but some are much more so than others. This comes about through their relative capacity to absorb humanity, and hold it, as it were, in suspension. Such words grow in time to be almost live things, coexisting with the ideas and emotions, the ideals and institutions for which they stand. Thus, many words come to us enveloped in atmosphere subtly permeated with implications and intimations of racial thought and feeling so fugitive as to escape direct expression. In this suggestibility or power of *connotation* lies the reserve force of language; and it is due to this that we can say with truth that "there is nothing in the world so potent as words."

Words differ greatly in connotative power. New words have little of suggestive meaning until experience has given it to them. And their connotation will vary with different people according to the intimacy and variety of these experiences. The word *tank,* as applied to an instrument of warfare, meant little to most of us when we first saw it in the news stories, though the denotation was clear. Then photographs began to appear and new associations were possible—caterpillar trucks, for instance, got into the picture; and to those of us who later saw upset or mired tanks in the French or German trenches, many new def-

inite suggestions were added—of stubborn power, of the intrepidity of tankmen, of the deadliness of the conflict in which they engaged. But, of course, to the men who actually fought in it, the tank would have associations no one else could possibly know. Thus words grow in connotation in accordance with the extent and nature of the experiences connected with them.

Older words are more likely to be rich in connotation. But connotations sometimes change, and the same words often have quite different associations for different people. The adjective *pious* was once a word denoting praise; it is now almost universally a negative term, with all sorts of unpleasant suggestions attached. *Victuals,* once a thoroughly respectable word, has come to have associations with things vulgar. Words in good repute with some people frequently come to be distasteful to others without any apparent foundation other than some unreasoned emotional reaction associated with what we may term antipathies. Professor F. N. Scott has charmingly discussed this subject under the head of "Verbal Taboos," in his *Standards of American Speech.* He lists there many terms that various writers have tried to legislate out of good use. One is surprised to find included such words as *editorial, impertinent, reliable, preposterous, telegram, depot* for *station,* and *railroad* for *railway.*

A writer cannot altogether ignore these isolated prejudices, yet his problem is, after all, to use words in their more commonly accepted connotations. No one can quite reckon with all individual differences.

Consistency in Connotation.—It need hardly be said that in good writing it is necessary to maintain a harmony, or a consonance of suggestion between words used in phrasal or sentence combinations. The following sentence is bad, for instance, because of a clash between the ideas expressed in *idly* and *industry:*

Idly wandering about looking for something to interest us is the *industry* that occupies the majority of us.

A similar discrepancy occurs in this sentence: *strolled* and *rushing* are not in consonance:

The two friends strolled along, eagerly following the rushing throng bound for the game.

Sheila Kaye-Smith is a competent writer, but in her *Joanna Godden Married* there occur two passages that have caused readers some discomfort. In the first, the words *shout* and *utter quietness* seem to be contradictory; in the second the term *grin* appears to be misapplied, especially to the always welcome English sun:

It was disconcerting, that shout of utter quietness which Ellen's clothes seemed to give.

. . . . .

In the house her joyous roses faded. The one girl—who was never added to, occasionally replaced by an inferior specimen, as the call of the munition factories was heard on Manhood's Marsh—had no time to keep the dust off the carpets nor the blinds drawn against the grin of the sun.

Michael Arlen likewise offends one's sense of logic in choice of words when in *The London Venture* he speaks of the old man as "cruelly aged by the sunlight which poured blessedly into the room." A *blessed* sunlight should assuredly have nothing to do with anything cruel. In such a combination artistic unity of tone is decisively violated.

Happy Connotations and Striking Phrase.—On the other hand, when a word is used in just the right connotation the result is happy indeed. Thus, when Walter de la Mare writes in one of his essays, of the modern "transitory widow in her inky weeds," and the "hangman in his decent black" our eyes brighten with satisfaction at the appropriateness of the expression. And when a little later

he describes Wilkie Collins' Count Fosco (in *The Woman in White*) as the "fat, catlike, but impeccable husband," and speaks of Harkwright's friend as a "galvanic, extremely diminutive Italian professor," our pleasure is at the bubbling point. There is nothing that stirs our imaginations and excites pleasure more quickly than the apt phrase that, striking straight to the center of truth, opens new vistas of suggestion. The old lady who complained of a younger woman's coming to a party "with not enough clothes to go to bed in decent" was not elegant, but she was effective. "The time-soured face of Bill, the drover, . . ." wrote a student, and delighted his teacher with a new image.

"Time-soured" is what we call an *epithet*. The epithet is sometimes considered as a figure of speech, but it need not be so set apart. It is really little more than especially telling diction accurately setting off some emphatic particularity of the thing described. Epithets are either single or compound. *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith,* Pinero entitled one of his plays, using a forceful, simple epithet. Excellent examples are to be found in poetry. Shelley's "Hail to thee *blithe* spirit," Keats's lines descriptive of Ruth

> when sick for home
> She stood in tears amid the *alien* corn

and those detailing the preparations for the killing of Lorenzo,

> So the two brothers and their *murder'd* man
> Rode past Florence.

all contain admirable illustrations of the single epithet.

Of compound adjective epithets, our literature furnishes a rich variety. Melville's *"Sledge-hammering sea"* and *"Sea-crashing* boat," and Spenser's *"Sea-shouldering* whales" are excellent examples. Old English—Anglo-

Saxon—was a most vigorous and poetic language. It was full of picturesque and striking epithets. In most of them one sees reflected the instinct for the definite and concrete, that instinct which has helped make England one of the most eminently poetic nations of the earth. The monster Grendel was a "March-riever" and a "slayer-of-souls," who crushed the "bone-frames" of his victims. Beowulf was the "battle-king," the "war-friend," the "giver-of-treasures," the "people-protector," who, hastening to the rescue of Hrothgar, had come with his shield-companions, tried-in-battle, in foamy-necked "wave-steeds" over the "whale-road," over the "swan-road." How one relishes the tang of those epithets for the sea—the rough virility of "whale-road," the poetic beauty of "swan-road"!

The Gift of Familiarity.—Herbert Spencer taught that words of Anglo-Saxon origin are better than those of Latin and French derivation. The simple old homely Anglo-Saxon words, he said, are the ones we learn first as children. The child says *I have,* not *I possess,* and *I wish,* not *I desire;* he begs for *play,* not *amusement;* things are *nice* or *nasty* to him, not *pleasant* or *disagreeable.* Having been learned first, such words naturally have more associations than the longer, harder ones that come into the vocabulary later; they are consequently more expressive, and more can be conveyed by them than by other words—hence they are the most economical.

Spencer's theory needs some modification; in fact, he himself offered some qualifications to it. It is not necessarily the Anglo-Saxon word that is most familiar to us from childhood up. There is, for instance, no reason to think that the words *mother* and *father,* which are of Anglo-Saxon origin, carry more association than *mamma* and *papa,* one of which is of Latin, the other of Greek origin. *Automobile* is probably one of the earlier words a child now learns, just as *buggy* or *cart* once was: yet it is distinctly not a Saxon word; neither for that matter is

buggy, which is of Hindu origin, nor *cart,* an Icelandic derivative—nor again, one is tempted to add, *stage-coach,* a combination of two words of French descent. Moreover, many long words, for one reason or another, may come very early to have intense emotional significance for certain individuals. Among such words one could name *punishment, horrible, decapitation, crucifixion, patriotism, Thanksgiving, celebration, tyrannical, annihilate, disgusting, wonderful.* Nevertheless, Spencer's general theory is a good one: the homely, common words of everyday speech, which we have all learned from the cradle up, are often the best to use.

"He who would be powerful (in writing) must have the terrible gift of familiarity," declared Emerson. And by this he meant more than mere familiarity with the words used; he had reference to a gift for making one's language sound familiar to those who hear it; and he therefore insisted that a writer should know the speech of the common man.

"Speak with the vulgar, think with the wise," he says.

See how Plato managed it, with an imagination so gorgeous, and a taste so patrician, that Jove, if he descended, was to speak in his style. Into the exquisite refinement of his Academy, he introduces the low-born Socrates, relieving the purple diction by his perverse talk, his gallipots, and cook, and trencher, and cart-wheels—and steadily kept this coarseness to flavor a dish else too luscious.

And again in the same essay he insists,

Ought not the scholar to convey his meaning in terms as short and strong as the smith and drover use to convey theirs? You know the history of the eminent writer on gypsies, George Borrow; he had one clear perception, that the key to every country was command of the language of the common people. He therefore mastered the *patois* of the gypsies, called Romany, which is spoken by them in all countries where they wander, in Europe, Asia, Africa.

—*Art and Criticism.*

Making due allowance for some overstatement here, Emerson's idea is essentially sound. Great writers have never turned their backs on the idiom of everyday speech. Scholars and pedants often do, but not your Shakespeares and Brownings and Galsworthys. Idioms spring eternal from the soil of natural thought and emotion and common experience.

The idiom gives a ruggedness and flavor to writing that cannot be achieved by other means. It sometimes appears that grammar is a foe to idiom, but in such cases grammar should go. As Walter Page declares, it is better to say "an agreement was come to" than that it "was consummated."

Likewise, *get used to, put up with, get it across,* and so forth, are accurate, expressive phrases which have their legitimate place in vital writing, and may be often used to advantage in place of more stiff and formal equivalents.

Words there are in the English language, homely strong old words, often ruled out of respectable society by an over-nice taste, which it is a pity to lose. And, fortunately, they are seldom lost, for ever and again there arise writers with a native relish for just these vigorous expressions, with all their tang and flavor, which are our natural heritage from the Celts, and Saxons, and sturdy Norman English. Such a writer was Sir Walter Scott, such Borrow, such O. Henry, and Mark Twain. In his *Life and Letters,* there is an amusing account of how the wife of Twain would take him to task for some of his scarce-Victorian expressions. "This word 'breech-clout,' of which you are so fond," she once wrote him in effect, "I abominate as much as you admire." "I'll cut out the word in this connection," he replied, "but, my dear, you are steadily weakening the language."

A danger that arises from learning words through reading is that we shall carelessly adopt the conventionalized language of books as a substitute for thought. The truth

is that, while we should enlarge our vocabulary through reading, we should use the words thus acquired only in forms of expression fitted to our own individual way of looking at things. Nothing is more distasteful to the practised ear than obviously "bookish" language, in the form of outworn phrases, cant terms, and the overworked *cliché*. "Conventionalism kills style," declares Lafcadio Hearn, and one may truthfully say that no kind of conventionalism is so inimical to good style as the merely conventional in words.

In one of his letters Walter Raleigh condemns merely conventionalized expressions on the ground that they conceal thought. Write for the "Oxford cabman," he urges a young scholar who has asked his advice on composition. It is sometimes the misfortune of those just learning to write to think that the ordinary words of everyday use,—such for example, as a cabman would know—are not fine enough, and they must perforce be running around looking for magnificent expressions, which sound like the writing in books, a practice which unfortunately leads only to what Thomas Hobbes calls a "palpable darkness." Such writers have not yet learned that the simple is often the most eloquent way to express an idea; nor have they learned that big words do not hide the lack of clear thought.

Concrete and Specific Language.—A definition of patriotism may be a very fine thing, but probably no such definition has ever impressed the mind like the story of the heroic Arnold Von Winkelried. Von Winkelried, it will be remembered, was the brave Swiss who at a critical moment in the great battle of Sempach, rushed upon the solid phalanx of Austrians, whose weapons formed an impassable barrier to advance, and, gathering an armful of spears into his bosom, made an opening through which his comrades fought their way to victory. Here is patriotism illustrated, and because it stirs the imagination through

its picture of human experience, at the same time that it appeals to the understanding, such illustration is always effective.

In somewhat the same way, concrete and specific words and phrases have more suggestive power than abstract and general terms. They lie nearer our everyday experiences, and therefore strike in upon us more quickly and more deeply. Concrete pictorial effect is best secured through figurative language, a subject of such importance that it will be discussed presently in a separate section. But the advantages of the concrete style may be also studied in substitutions of the individual concrete word or phrase for the abstract. Thus the abstract term *liberty* has much less significance to us than the more concrete *freedom of worship* or *freedom of speech.* Likewise, *fraternity* will ordinarily suggest less than *brotherly love,* or *kindness to the unfortunate; filial affection* less than *love for father and mother; justice,* than *equality before the law, fair play, trial by jury, unbiased decision,* etc.

In the same way, it is far more effective to say, He was dismissed from school for *cheating in examination,* than, He was dismissed from school for *dishonesty. Purity* is an abstract word which in itself is often highly suggestive. But the extent to which a more concrete equivalent may be superior in delicate suggestive power may be shown by a reference to an illustration from a student's theme. The writer was a young lady who had been lately shocked by the discovery that a girl friend, by whom she was sitting at the time of the disclosure, had broken the conventional code. "I found I was sitting," she wrote, "beside a prostitute who five minutes before had been talking of the miracle of cherry blossoms." In using the concrete phrase "the miracle of cherry blossoms" instead of such an abstract word as *purity,* this writer showed almost the perfection of a sense for piquant suggestion.

Specific words give point and precision to a style. The

specific style is a definite style. General words carry to the mind vague, undefined images; specific expressions, clear and exact images. Most people think best in terms of the specific and concrete, and feeling is habitually aroused in response to definite imagery. The specific method in writing, then, is the method of direct, vivid impression as opposed to the indirectness of vague or even ambiguous generalities. Thus, it means much less to say that our neighbors are *in trouble* than to say that they have *sickness;* to say they have *sickness* is in turn far less satisfactory than to make clear that the father has *typhoid fever.* It is better to say *sword* than *weapon;* and *broadsword, rapier,* or *scimitar* than *sword.* The word *reptile* will not usually create such aversion as *snake;* and *rattlesnake* or *copperhead* will start more shivers than either. If one is talking about rare old books, to mention a *Caxton* or a *de Worde,* or a *Copland,* or a *Pynson,*[1] or to refer to a First Folio of Shakespeare (1623) or to a First Edition of *Paradise Lost,* will be more effective than to speak in general terms.

To speak in general terms is to leave an unnecessary residue in communication, and hence is to leave the mind unsatisfied. Good writers know this and are usually as specific as they can be. Macaulay, for instance, had a strong sense for the specific as a means to pictorial presentation. At the battle of Landen the English were commanded by William III, the French by the Duke of Luxembourg. The one was a sick man, the other a cripple; but see how picturesquely Macaulay puts it: Among 120,000 soldiers, he says, "the two feeblest in body were the hunchbacked dwarf who urged forward the fiery onset of France, and the asthmatic skeleton who covered the slow retreat of England." This is excellent; in contrast with the vague response the general terms *cripple* and

[1] William Caxton established the first English printing press (about 1476). De Worde, Copland, and Pynson were his disciples and followers.

sick man would have aroused, Macaulay has here flashed on our minds concrete, vivid pictures which stimulate the imagination to quick, pleased perception.

Onomatopœia.—A special type of concrete expression is the Anglo-Saxon imitative word known as *onomatopœia.* Through its likeness to the thing imitated it has unusual capacity to reproduce the sense experience which it denotes. Such words are *whiz, bang, roar, boom, swish, bing, splash, whack, crack, zip, buzz, sizzle, hiss, bow-wow, meow, plunk.* Words like this, when used judiciously, give to style a touch of vivid reality difficult to achieve through any other means. A further mention of the onomatopœic expression as a device for arousing sense imagery is made in the chapter on Description.

V

Figurative Language

The method of figurative language is to stir the emotions and to excite the imagination, and to bring both to the aid of understanding in vivid, full comprehension. It does this through suggesting more than is said; by presenting the idea in a new relationship; by comparing it in some respect with some known thing otherwise dissimilar; by flatly calling it some well-known thing in general unlike it; by personifying it, if it is an inanimate object; or by revealing it in some other unaccustomed light. The effect of the sudden presentation of this new combination of ideas, if the combination is recognized as a true one, startles the mind, as it were, into pleased and enlarged perception impossible to effect through bare statement. Hence there are in successful figures of speech the flavor of poetry and the essence of truth. It is a union well calculated to diminish the volume of residues in the communication of thought.

Figurative, as distinguished from *literal,* language is often classed under the general head of *metaphor,* and it is, on the whole, a satisfactory term. But for closer study, it is convenient to make a distinction between the different kinds of figures.

The Simile.—Where a direct comparison is made, as in the homely old folk expression, "Put him in a parlor, and he would be like a bull in a china shop,"—we have a *simile.* Such comparison owes its force to its ability to suggest powerfully one salient point of resemblance between two objects otherwise unlike. Similes are the everyday equipment of the interesting talker. "A grin like a Cheshire cat," "a fist like a mallet," "eyes as big as saucers," "silent as a grave," are some of the frequently used expressions. An original mind is constantly coining comparisons. Only through such comparisons can one convey his peculiar way of seeing things. Such was the example given earlier in this book describing the appearance of water sparkling in the moonlight—"like daisies in a breeze." The simile has had a wide literary use. Homer, Milton, Dante, have written unforgettable similes. There is no more perfect one in literature than this from Keats's *Hyperion.* It is Homeric in form, that is, the comparison comes first:

> As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
> Those green-robed senators of ancient woods,
> Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
> Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
> Save from one gradual solitary gust
> Swelling upon the silence, dying off,
> As if the ebbing air had but one wave,
> So came these words and went.
>
> —*Fall of Hyperion.*

A simile is not always directly expressed, though the figure is in effect complete, as a sentence from Hardy's

Woodlanders will illustrate. Marty South is working on into the chilly night, resisting the suggestion that she sell her hair. The barber has left two gold coins to tempt her.

The two sovereigns confronted her from the looking glass in such a manner as to suggest a pair of jaundiced eyes on the watch for an opportunity.

There is also indirect simile in this extract from Thoreau:

I rejoice that there are owls. Let them do the idiotic and maniacal hooting for men. It is a sound admirably suited to swamps and twilight woods which no day illustrates, suggesting a vast and undeveloped nature which men have not recognized. They represent the stark twilight and unsatisfied thoughts which all have.

While the form of the simile is not used here, there is comparison throughout. In this case the comparison becomes almost symbolic. Symbolism is not of course direct simile, but it closely resembles it in effect.

The following list of selected similes from various authors may be studied as examples of effective comparisons:

Coughed like a cow who finds feathers in her hay. (Balzac)

Rosy as a victorious candidate. (George Meredith)

Eager as a cry for life. (George Meredith)

Ghastly as a laugh in hell. (Thomas Hardy)

Earrings like chandeliers. (Thackeray)

Grand as a floorwalker. (O. Henry)

Silent as the growth of flowers. (Aphra Behn)

Irritating as a hundred needles forgotten in an armchair. (Daudet)

Great men are like meteors. They glitter and are concerned to light the world. (Napoleon)

A disordered mind is "like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh." (In *Hamlet*)

Sir Phillip Gibbs said Clemenceau looked "like a walrus"!

They always wanted to know the reason for everything. As if one could give reasons, at the age of six and twenty, when life felt like a dead volcano, and your heart was ready to break for something or nothing. (*Doomsday,* Warwick Deeping)

Metaphor.—If a likeness is felt so vividly that the writer can directly call one thing by the name of another, the result is a *metaphor.* "The sun," pictorially writes René Maran in *Batouala,* "dropped into the alligator jaws of the void." This sort of comparison, where the leap is completely made and identity implied, is often even more arresting than the simile. The metaphor is especially fitted to express the most striking resemblances. Years ago, the sports writers habitually mentioned Maulbetsch, the famous Michigan back, as the "human bullet"; likewise, Charles Martel was once known as "the hammer of God," just as Attila was "the scourge of God," and Clemenceau of France "the tiger." Sandburg makes Chicago the "hog-butcher for the world," "stacker of wheat," "tool-maker," "player with railroads," and so forth,—all metaphors.

Literature could get along less well without the metaphor than the simile, if one may judge by the relative frequency of its occurrence. Tennyson, who was accustomed to construct metaphors and similes from his observation of nature and jot them down in his notebook, has left us many excellent examples. Lines of poetry he described as

> Jewels five words long,
> That on the stretched forefinger of all Time
> Sparkle forever.

Alfred Noyes, describing Copernicus in the process of imagining the impossibility of the distant stars circling the earth each day, makes the astronomer say,

> . . . a journey that would need
> Swiftness to which the lightning flash would seem
> A white slug creeping on the walls of night.
>
> —*Watchers of the Skies.*

This is indeed so near a simile that it might be listed as one. A classic example of metaphor occurs in the first lines of Shakespeare's seventy-third sonnet:

> That time of year thou mayst in me behold,
> When yellow leaves or none or few do hang
> Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,—
> Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

Here is metaphor within metaphor, with such a wealth of suggestion as one may perhaps not find in any other four lines of poetry ever written. An instance of literary borrowing—perhaps unconscious—with at the same time a transformation of a simile into a metaphor is to be found in O'Neill's *The Great God Brown.* Keats once characterized the pain of reflection upon certain kinds of human suffering as being "like a sensitive leaf on the hot hand of thought." O'Neill writes in metaphor, "Your hand is a cool mud poultice on the sting of thought." In Emerson's essays there are numerous passages of unusual metaphoric suggestion. There is scarcely a better one, however, than his remark on the comic in Shakespeare:

> His fun is as wise as his earnest, its foundations are below the frost.

The following sentence from a student's analysis of his first semester in college furnishes an admirable example of figurative writing:

> It has been a term of disillusionment. Egotism is falling down the stairs, but is clutching at the railing.

And to those who are a little weary of the word "melting-pot" in certain connections, the substitution of a new term, in a student's theme on "American Speech," affords a grateful relief:

> Of course America is the mixing bowl into which are poured all the races and tongues of the world, and because of this we must be prepared for the adoption of many of the innovations which are now creeping into our speech.

Metonymy, Synecdoche, Personification.—Closely related to the metaphor are the figures usually known as *metonymy* and *synecdoche*. In each of these an essential feature of the metaphor is retained, in that one thing is called something else. The difference is, however, that no comparison is implied. These figures derive their force from association. In *metonymy* a thing is designated by something else habitually connected with it as a container, a cause or effect, or an accompaniment. Thus we speak of "the downfall of theories," "the power of the press," the force of the "pulpit" and of "setting a fine table"; we say the "radiator boils," "he is too fond of his bottle"; we exclaim "O grave, where is thy victory!"; and we demand respect for "gray hairs" and sympathy for "tears."

A *synecdoche* is a figure in which a part stands for the whole, as a "sail" for a ship; an attribute or quality for the object, as in "The college assembled all its learning on the platform"; a sign or symbol for the thing designated, as in sentences referring to "belief in the Cross" or the "Crescent," or "dying for one's flag"; a word for a class of objects, as in "a perfect Shylock," or a "Daniel come to judgment." In short, a synecdoche is possible wherever there is such habitual association that one thing may stand for something else. The strength of metonymy and synecdoche lies in the pictorial appeal of the concrete and

visual and prominent, as opposed to the abstract and general.

Personification.—Personification is a vivid form of metaphor, which arises primarily neither from similarity nor association, but through sheer force of imagination in conceiving an inanimate thing or an idea as possessing life and thought and feeling. The tendency to personify is an old and powerful one. Death and Time have been habitually spoken and written of as persons, and at some time or other in the history of literature, perhaps every natural phenomenon and every important abstraction, every virtue, pleasure, sin, or vice has been depicted as possessing a sentient personality. "Joy, whose hand is ever at her lips bidding adieu," writes Keats, and he speaks of "Veil'd Melancholy," "her sovran shrine"; and of autumn as the "close bosom-friend of the maturing sun." Watson declares:

> Song is not Truth, not Wisdom, but the rose
> Upon Truth's lips, the light in Wisdom's eyes.

Personification often arises from a strong sense of powers working in and behind visible and other phenomena. To the sensitive mind natural forces and things of the physical world actually seem alive. Nature especially appears so closely connected with us and so interested in us as to compel such a belief. Something of this idea is expressed in a passage from Emerson, itself containing an excellent personification of Nature.

> Nature stretches out her arms to embrace man, only let his thoughts be of equal greatness. Willingly does she follow his steps with the rose and the violet, and bend her lines of grandeur and grace to the decoration of her darling child. Only let his thoughts be of equal scope, and the frame will suit the picture. A virtuous man is in unison with her works, and makes the central figure of the visible sphere. Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion, associate

themselves fitly in our memory with the geography and climate of Greece. The visible heavens and earth sympathize with Jesus. And in common life whosoever has seen a person of powerful character and happy genius, will have remarked how easily he took all things along with him,—the persons, the opinions, and the day, and nature became ancillary to man.

—*On Nature.*

Hyperbole.—Hyperbole is artistic exaggeration through some form of overstatement. Thus, when Arnold Bennett wishes to indicate Lady Massulam's extreme disinclination to talk, he writes hyperbolically:

It was not that Lady Massulam was tongue-tied, not that she was impolite; it was merely that with excellent calmness she did not talk. If anybody handed her a subject, she just dropped it; the floor around her was strewn with subjects.

Hyperbole is found in its simplest form in such a title as *The Thousand and One Nights,* which scholars now believe was applied loosely to indicate a considerable, but indefinite, number of tales, just as in Constantinople today there is a place called *The Thousand and One Pillars,* the actual number of pillars being about forty.

In exactly the same way we indicate our feeling for a great many tasks or annoyances, when we say, "I have a thousand and one errands to do before I leave tomorrow," or "I had a million interruptions this morning."

In *Rough Justice* there is a delightful scene in which Garth amusedly observes the development of language values in his two children:

Riding out before breakfast they met a trailing drift of cattle, twenty head or so. "Oh, Fahva, what sousands of cows!" Bron shouted, with joyous hyperbole.

Molly glanced quickly across at his father. "Thousands," she said, "is just a sort of expression that Bron and I have."

Garth nodded. They presently came to a field more yellow than

others. Bron shouted elatedly, "Sousands of Butterdups!" Then he checked, pondered a moment, and added, "Real sousands, not a 'spression." It gave Garth pleasure to see the child feeling its way toward the spare and vivid precision of thoroughbred speech.

In the next meadow four horses were grazing. Garth laughingly challenged the young hyperbolist: "Thousands of horses, Bronkin?"

"Oh, Fahva!" Bron answered, "that isn't even a 'spression. It's just a make up. Not enough horses to make it a 'spression."

—C. E. MONTAGUE, *Rough Justice.*

Here in precept and observance is not only the hyperbole, but a condensation of the whole theory of figurative language and its function in training for the "spare and vivid precision of thoroughbred speech."

Litotes.—Just as hyperbole as a "'spréssion" owes its suggestibility to our recognition of conscious overstatement—"a million students," "a mountain of food," "thousands of cattle," and so forth—*litotes,* its opposite, derives its effect from deliberate understatement. Its appeal lies partially perhaps in our instinctive respect for restraint in a writer, but more, no doubt, in the elasticity of our own imaginations, which, when presented with an obviously low figure or reduced image, at one leap frame a conception somewhere near the other extreme. The instinct for litotes may be easily illustrated by reference to both literary and popular speech. *Beowulf,* England's earliest epic poem, is filled with understatement. Instead of speaking of a multitude of fighting men, the poet says, to indicate a great number, there was "no dearth of warriors"; when the raid of the monster Grendel has terrorized the followers of Hrothgar, who had formerly slept in the great hall of Heorot, the poet skillfully depicts their feeling by a bit of as grim litotes as can be found in literature:

They were easy to find who elsewhere sought in room remote their rest that night.

Likewise, it is through litotes that the impression of the weird and gloomy fen-like entrance to the undersea cave of Grendel's mother is summed up:

> 'tis no happy place.

In the lays of Marie de France, written about 1200, one finds this example of effective litotes:

> They told her frankly that they would not suffer such wrong to be done, since the slaying of a child was not reckoned a jest.

Through adroit understatement, Dickens shows the effects of wine upon two already chatty youths:

> Martin [who was very generous with his money] ordered another glass of punch, which they drank between them, and which had not the effect of making them less conversational than before.
>
> —*Martin Chuzzlewit.*

Of the calculating, inconstant Cressida, Chaucer wrote, "Cressida was not so kind as she ought to be." An instance of the use of litotes by a modern writer is to be seen in the following sentence from Percival Wren's *Beau Sabreur*:

> Soon the cruel cold, the clammy damp, the wicked flea, the furtive rat, the noisy odor, and the proud stomach combine with the hard bench and aching bones to make me wish that I were not a sick and dirty man starving in prison.

The restraint here shown in the very mild concluding wish is probably the more striking in contrast with the much stronger language which precedes it.

Euphemism.—Litotes should not be confused with *euphemism,* which has become a rather thoroughly negative term applicable to a certain over-nicety in using language. Thus, when Maugham relates that the underbred Mildred (in *Of Human Bondage*) affects such gentility of speech as to call "pants or breeches 'nether garments,' " he is criticizing her for vulgar euphemism. To talk of *limbs*

when *legs* are meant,—and there was a time in early American history when it was thought vulgar to mention the *legs* of a table—is to be guilty of euphemism; and so it is to use any one of the rather large number of softening expressions formerly more popular than at present, such as, *retire* for *go to bed, perform ablutions* for *take a bath, partake of nourishment* for *eat, disrobe* for *undress, pass away, depart this life,* etc., for *die.*

Right and Wrong Use of Figures.—The figure of speech is useful only when it is an aid to complete and beautiful expression. But it can be this only when it is true. A writer who deliberately sets himself to construct figures, thinking thus to ornament his style, will miss his mark entirely, will only make his writing empty or ridiculous. The comparison that springs from close observation and luminous thinking beautifies and strengthens; but artificiality is nowhere else in all writing so conspicuous. "The heart of another," writes Willa Cather in *The Professor's House,* "is a dark forest, always, no matter how close it has been to one's own." That is true, powerful, beautiful. But put beside it an example of verbose, untrue "mixed metaphor" so called, an artificial attempt at "fine writing," such as, "soon they see the reflection of their work shining forth as a radiant image satisfying their thirst and longing," and you at once discover the sad failure of figurative language which is not sincere. This impression becomes clearer by comparing the amusing example of mental confusion—a *spark,* and *water,* and *growth,* in one breath—in the following sentence, "Every student when he comes to college has a spark of originality; it is the duty of the instructor to water this and make it grow"; or such incongruous imagery as occurs in the sentence, "Having girded my loins with a high-school diploma, I came up to the university," with this strongly sustained simile from a college student's theme:

There is a standard of speech, it is true; but the beauty of a tree is not in its trunk; it lies in the sweep of the branches and the color of the leaves: so it is with speech, which is a cumulation of the classics, the literary, the technical, the vulgar, the artistic, the ancient, and the modern. It is alive, always growing, always changing. . . .

Perhaps the best rule is this: Do not *try* to use figures at all, but when they come of themselves, leaping into the mind as apt, true expression, then make the most of them.

VI

Too Many Words

When Quintilian wrote in sharp disapproval of clouds of empty words which obscure thought, he was speaking as a practical teacher and critic of a common fault in writing. Wordiness obscures thought for the reason that it leads to inexact expression. In the wordy sentence there is no precision of meaning; the writer has not shown that he really knows what he wants to say, nor that he could say it if he did know. Nothing else so weakens style. Wordiness perplexes, therefore inevitably annoys and eventually bores the reader. Wordiness may take several forms, not all of which are equally objectionable. It is convenient for purposes of discussion to give some of these forms names.

Tautology.—Tautology has reference to repetition of idea. Simple examples are "close proximity," "two mutual friends," "an unusual, unique sight." Tautology is one of the easiest of errors to correct. Usually it is merely a matter of striking out words. How such a process clarifies and strengthens style is illustrated in the following, where a tautological sentence is rewritten, with all the unnecessary words omitted.

He desired to adorn her with the things which money could buy—things such as jewels, exquisite gowns, and everything which his money could buy.

He desired to adorn her with all that money could buy—jewels, exquisite gowns, everything.

Pleonasm is a form of tautology. In its simplicity it is illustrated in such illiterate forms as "Bill Jones, *he* spoke up and said . . . " The following sentence occurred in a college student's theme, "The youngest child of Zeb's, really a child no more but a woman, she was in school." Here again the problem is simple: merely strike out the redundant word.

Pleonasm is sometimes used as a legitimate literary device for securing emphasis, as in "And now abideth faith, hope and charity, *these three;* but the greatest of these is charity."[1]

Redundancy.—Wherever a passage is in general cluttered with unnecessary words, we label the trouble redundancy. The phrase *haven't got,* when *haven't* alone is enough to denote possession, is a redundant phrase. Thus, "I haven't got any teeth to hurt" (*Daisy Miller*). Likewise, *very* in "A *very* unique sight" is redundant. Uniqueness is an absolute quality, which admits of no modification. Redundancy and tautology so often go together in written passages that it is hard to illustrate the one without the other. These sentences exemplify both faults:

If one wishes to see or witness a wonderful scene, singularly entrancing in its wide diversity of interests and attractions it is only necessary to be present at a boat pier just before the boat is to leave on an extended trip to some foreign land.

[1] I Corinthians, xiii: 13.

Each peal of thunder seemed to be heralding some impending danger or catastrophe, each flash of lightning seemed momentarily, as it were, to illumine for a brief space, forthcoming failures and disappointments.

The lower row of teeth were set in a jaw which by its moderate protrusion and squareness gave him a look of determination, resolution, forcefulness, and character, without sacrificing the element of attractiveness in his impressive, handsome face.

(Rewrite these sentences.)

Verbosity and Prolixity.—The most irritating kinds of wordiness are verbosity and prolixity. *Verbosity* may be described as a sort of extended redundancy. The term is usually applied to passages of some length, overloaded with annoying verbiage. A verbose piece of writing may and often does contain all the kinds of wordiness so far mentioned. *Prolixity* is an even graver fault than verbosity, for it implies not only much useless phraseology, but useless material as well: fulsome, unnecessary detail, irrelevancies, digressions, even repetitions. Garrulous old men are often prolix; Wordsworth was guilty of prolixity in parts of his *Excursion;* the mediæval writers of metrical romance who ran their poems through endless digressions up to as high as 30,000 lines were prolix; the freshman who fills six pages with writing when he has material for only three is prolix.

A passage from a seventeenth-century translation made at a time when writers were likely to be more wordy than at present will illustrate the sin of *verbosity* and will at least suggest the crime of *prolixity:*

And as he came this last night, as he was wont to do as ill-fortune would have it, who in the mutability of her nature ordereth and disposeth all things according to her disordered custom, the

walls being high, the night dark, the ladder light and weak, his servants that brought it unacquainted with that kind of service, he going down somewhat hastily to see a fray, which he heard in the street between his servants and some others that then passed by, being in choler, making more haste than good speed, thinking he should never come soon enough, not eyeing well his steps, he sets his foot quite besides the rounds, and so fell down, and with that woeful and unfortunate fall, he pitched upon his head, and had his brains beaten out, and dashed in pieces against the stones and pavement of the street.[1]

(Try rewriting this sentence, omitting all excess verbiage.)

VII #

Words to Use and Words to Avoid

A book of this sort has value only as it records for young writers some of the discoveries that have been made by the masters in "the panther quest" for more adequate interchange of thought. It must be admitted in the first place that the game is not yet bagged, that the secrets have not yet been all uncovered, for the English language is still growing, and no record of it therefore will ever be perfect or complete. This is especially true in application to the discussion of words and the uses of words. Words that were in disrepute yesterday are in good use today. On the other hand, hundreds of words that Shakespeare and his contemporaries thought good, have been completely dropped from our modern vocabularies. We were once told never to use contractions, like *won't, don't, it's,* in formal writing; yet today men of classical taste habitually disregard this rule. We were at one time told not to use *fix* for *repair,* yet good writers like Willa Cather do it freely. And, frequently as we have been warned against

[1] *Calisto and Melibea.* Translated from the Spanish by John Mabbe, 1630.

the impropriety of using *a lot* in the sense of *a great deal,* one finds even in *The London Times* Supplement, the sentence, "And he knows a *lot* of natural history." A little while ago, the books were saying that *gotten* is obsolescent, that is, is going out of use, yet one sees and hears it constantly, as in such a sentence as "I could have gotten a reduction in rates if I had ordered my ticket yesterday." In the same way, the word *nice* in the sense of agreeable has often been ruled out of good usage by the texts, but as Professor Charles Fries of the University of Michigan has recently shown,[1] Webster's dictionary makes no such exception to this use of the word, and every one knows that most of the educated people around us do not.

Slang.—In a sense, slang may be looked upon as a revolt from the conventional in using language. As such, it has its supporters and its uncompromising enemies. One modern authority calls slang the "corrupting matter" of speech; another speaks of its processes as being "strikingly linguistic," that is, allied to the natural processes through which language evolves. There is truth in both views. Slang may be easily condemned on the basis of its frequent tendency to loose, slovenly, and bizarre expression. No one can commend, for instance, the indolent habit of inexact substitution which occurs where some more or less originally expressive word is made to stand for almost anything of a general class. Examples of this are *awfully nice, thanks awfully, awfully exciting, lovely* when made to stand for everything from a sunset to a fox-trot, or *great,* in *a great day, a great girl,* or *isn't it great?*—equally applicable to a cathedral, a football game, or an ice cream soda. Nor does the lazy fondness for clipped expression place slang in a better light. How many thou-

[1] "The Meaning of Words," in *The English Journal.* The editors of Webster's sustain Mr. Fries in his assertion. See *Word Study,* December, 1927.

sands of teachers are made to cringe daily at the prevalent *exam* for *examination, lit* for *literature, ec* for *economics, rhet* for *rhetoric,* and so forth. And even more offensive are the grotesqueries that are ever springing up on street and campus alike, to flourish their brief season and then to slip into ignominious oblivion. Such is the recent *all wet,* in "He's all wet," "It's all wet," etc. In so far, then, as slang is used as a slovenly substitute for exact language in the form of loosely-applied blanket terms or of disagreeable clipped expression, and in so far as it merely satisfies a vulgar feeling for the pert and odd and grotesque, it is sure to be offensive to people of taste and should be avoided.

There is this to be said for slang, however. Slang expressions often seem to arise from a strong feeling for the vigor and natural flavor of homely, colloquial speech, or for more picturesque and pointed expression than the ordinary vocabulary affords, or from a recognition of the fitness of some fortuitous coinage to fill a gap in the language. Such slang often finds its way into accepted usage, and it is here, of course, that slang-making may be defended as a vital linguistic process. Many valuable words in present good use were once slang. Such is *break ground* as applied to the beginning of almost any undertaking, a transfer from building operations; another is *to cross swords* in legal argument, or to *fence* and *parry,* terms carried over from the slang of dueling; while yet other words and phrases, either certainly or presumably of slang origin, are *omnibus, crestfallen, banter, salary, grit* (for stamina), *doggerel, cockney, coxcomb, to tilt at, to break a lance, to win the palm.* And, to recur to the tendency to abbreviate longer words, it must be admitted here that, much as one may dislike the often vulgar habit of shortening words and phrases, the clipped expression has often been adopted permanently into the language. *Mob, hoax,*

carouse, pose, squire, wayward, even the adverb and preposition *down,* are such words.

Professors Greenough and Kittredge, from whose excellent book, *Words and Their Ways in English Speech,* many of the foregoing examples have been taken, say:

It appears, then, that there is no real difference in kind between the processes of slang and those of legitimate speech. Slang is only the rude luxuriance of the uncared-for soil, knowing not the hand of the gardener.

Yet it by no means follows that the products of slang are at once to be adopted, without further question. In the first place, all human speech, even the most intimate, is intended for the ears of others, and must therefore have a certain dignity, a certain courtesy, out of respect to one's hearers if not to one's self. Now slang, from the very fact that it *is* slang, that it is not the accepted medium of communication, has a taint of impropriety about it which makes it offensive. Again, the very currency of slang depends on its allusions to things which are not supposed to be universally familiar or generally respectable; and hence it is vulgar, since it brings in associations with what is for the moment regarded as unknown or in bad repute.

It is true that words have no character in themselves, being only conventional signs for the ideas which they express. Even bad grammar is essentially just as good as good grammar; it becomes bad merely because it is associated with persons that we dislike or look down on. And bad language is only such because it is not the accepted form of speech. Yet the recognized connotations of particular words are an integral part of expression, and when these are such as to shock or offend our associates, the words themselves should be avoided.

Furthermore, the accepted means of communication in any widespread language has a certain constant and enduring nature. Though language is ever changing, yet the permanent elements far outweigh the variable, so that it remains continuously intelligible through long periods of time. Slang words, on the contrary, are evanescent, counting their duration by days instead of decades, and becoming obsolete even while one is speaking them. Hence

slang is ill-adapted to serve as a medium of intercourse and therefore is unsuitable for adoption into legitimate speech.

Finally, the unchecked and habitual use of slang (even polite slang) is deleterious to the mind. Not only is slang evanescent,—it also has no fixed meaning. Its terms are vague and ill-defined, and they grow more and more uncertain from day to day. Thus the use of slang tends to level all those nice distinctions of meaning, all those differentiations between word and word, which the consensus of the language has been at so much pains to build up. Everything is "fine!" or "immense!" or "stunning!" or "just gay!" from an appetizing breakfast to an epic poem, from Alpine scenery to the cut of a friend's coat. Slang has been called the "lazy man's dialect," and if the sign of cultivation is an enriched vocabulary, the constant use of vague and unselected terms for every shade of meaning must gradually reduce one's thought to the same ignorant level from which slang proceeds. When such a word becomes definite in its meaning, it has almost ceased to be slang. If it happens to fill a real gap in our means of expression, language will take care of it, as we have already seen in numerous examples. In fact, anything that is good in slang is almost sure to be picked up and adopted in legitimate speech.

Other Doubtful Usages—Colloquialisms, Provincialisms, Archaisms, Coinages, etc.—So much that has just been said of slang applies to other expressions not in good use, or just on the borderland wavering between acceptance and rejection, that the group may be considered as a whole without further preliminary discussion. The general linguistic problem is almost identical with that of slang—a subtle maneuvering on the part of homely, everyday speech, or otherwise unconventional language, to find a place in our language.

A *colloquialism* is a word which has found a fairly respectable place in the speech of even intelligent and educated people, which, however, these same people might hesitate to use in formal writing. Thus to *lick, larrup,* or *warm one's jacket,* are all colloquial expressions for the more formal *beat* or *thrash; done-up* and *done-out* are

colloquial for undone; *dead-beat* for a no-account; *go to the dogs* and *all up with,* for falling or declining in fortunes. *Nincompoop,* once listed as slang, is now usually thought of as colloquial, and likewise *bamboozle, possum, cute, phone, blues, pike* are clipped slang expressions which have graduated into colloquialisms. *Movie* for *moving picture* would seem to be passing from colloquialism into accepted usage just as *cinema,* shortened from *cinematograph* long since became acceptable in England. Perhaps such a word as *phone* is likewise soon to achieve this goal. Colloquial expressions are forever slipping into the company of unquestioned respectability; no one knows how to draw absolute lines, and few are so rash as to try. It may be readily seen that, like slang, the colloquialism is useful as a corrective for stilted, bookish usage. Out of each there often springs the sharp, ready-cutting English idiom that gives our language half its strength.

A *provincialism* is a colloquialism confined to a certain section of the country, like the South, the West, or New England. *I reckon* and *you all,* for instance, have long been thought of as belonging peculiarly to the South. *Dialect* is a form of provincialism relating chiefly to pronunciation: thus New England once used the broad *a,* the Middle West the flat *a;* the southern Negro says *heah* for *here;* the Bostonian *idear* for *idea.* Out of dialectical differences have grown such interesting accepted variations in our language as *clinch* and *clench, thresh* and *thrash,* etc. A *localism* is a provincialism confined to a relatively small section of the country. Thus Arizona cowboys use the word *wrangle* for staking out horses at night, and the phrase *make the bed down,* for making a bed; in California ranch circles the phrase *dude ranch* has grown up to indicate a certain kind of summer resort for city people who want to live the ranch life for a time. *Two bits* for twenty-five cents is a western colloquialism; *Wheat Pit* is limited to Chicago's stock exchange.

Americanism or *United States, Anglicism* or *British, Scottish,* and *Australianism,* are terms applied to words current in one of the larger divisions of the English-speaking world, but not used elsewhere. Through the growing influence of trade, travel, and general literary interchange, such distinctions are being largely broken down, but a limited number still persist. Many of these are in the field of slang and colloquialism, however. Of chief interest to us here are such distinctions as exist between American and English speech. Thus the slangy or colloquial *guess, bossy, hard-shell, hoodooed, wear the breeches,* are used chiefly in the United States, while *bounder, get the boot, take the knock,* are more strictly British. In accepted usage a brief comparative list will suggest the nature of such differences as exist:

American	*English*
post card	letter card
trolley car	tram car
freight train	goods train
mail car	mail van
engineer	engine driver
elevator	lift
movie	cinema
derby	bowler
druggist	chemist
editorial	leader

Of more difficulty to the writer is an occasional difference in phrasal combinations, such as the English use of *different to* where Americans say *different from.* Which of the two is right? Or may they be used interchangeably? As a rule, Americans are very stubborn in refusing to accept the *different to,* and it probably will not come into good use here. But, in general, such matters need worry the young writer very little. Most of such variations as occur

are now well understood in both countries, and if they were not it would be no serious matter—the list is so brief. Dr. Fred Newton Scott, who made a thorough study of the subject,[1] concluded that there are less than six hundred words between America and England in vocabulary, and that the larger part of these are the more transitory slang and colloquial expressions.

Archaisms.—Archaisms are words which were once good but are now lost out of the language. Thus *changer* for *merchant, evert* for *avert, well to live* for *well to do, endlong, wot, trow, oft,* etc., are archaisms and as such are not in good use. Archaisms owe attempts at their revival to much the same underlying causes as give rise to most slang—a desire for novelty, a feeling for more vital, more accurate, less worn expression; and, like slang, archaisms once put into reputable society afterward refuse to be degraded from it. And often this is to the advantage of current speech. George Gissing and Christopher Morley have both made attractive use of the verb *swink,* for instance, and J. B. Cabell has successfully employed dozens of words long since sunk into desuetude. Cabell, to be sure, does this in a style which furnishes an appropriate setting for these visitors from the past, and his revivals will therefore not fit into every style. Poets have always been the most active in reinstating the old words. Thus Spenser went back to Chaucer, and Keats to Spenser, each enriching his vocabulary with hundreds of golden expressions that it would have been a pity to lose. But for the ordinary prose writer, archaisms are probably bad. And perhaps Fowler and Fowler are right when they say, "Regarded as a counter-irritant to slang, archaism is a failure." [2]

Fowler and Fowler list among objectionable archaisms

[1] "America and England Six Hundred Words Apart," *McNaught's Magazine,* December, 1925.

[2] *The King's English,* Oxford, 1924.

such uses as *shall* in a sentence like "A coiner or smuggler shall get off tolerably well"; the historian's *should* in "It *should* seem"; subjunctive forms of *to be* in such clauses as "If Mr. Hobhouse's analysis of the vices of popular government *be* correct," "It *were* futile to attempt to deprive it of its real meaning," and "He is putting in poetic 'frills,' if the phrase *be* not too mean." [1]

Coinages.—New words—*neologisms*—originate in various ways, usually, of course, in answer to some felt need or to the popular acceptance of some newly uncovered phrase that seems to be just right for the place. Galsworthy suggests in his *Forsyte Saga* an idea that had probably come to him as an explanation for the genesis of many words and phrases. In a tense scene between Winifred and her renegade husband Montague Dartie, Winifred, having wrenched herself free from his grasp, and having placed the table between them, "said between her teeth: 'you are the limit, Monty.'" This, says Galsworthy in parenthesis, was "Undoubtedly the inception of that phrase—so is English formed under the stress of circumstances." A new invention or discovery naturally calls for a new word; as does progress in any field of thought or work. The Great War, for instance, gave us *hangar, camouflage,* and *tank;* modern science and philosophy have supplied such expressions as *electron, electrolysis, behaviorist, psychoanalysis, empathy, introvert, radio,* and *static.*

Many words have had their beginnings from names which stood for certain movements or ideas. Thus, *chauvinism* may be traced to Nicholas Chauvin, an officer whose unrestrained devotion to Napoleon was so conspicuous as to be satirized in French vaudeville. Hence *chauvinism* came to stand for extravagant patriotism. In the same

[1] For a more complete discussion of archaisms the student will find *The King's English,* pages 193-200, excellent—even though the authors are a bit strait-laced in attitude.

way the word *boycott* came from Captain Boycott, first victim of the Irish form of resistance to oppressive landlordism described by the word. Every one knows of course, how *sandwich* originated from Lord Sandwich's hasty lunches of meat between slices of bread during a busy session of Parliament. *Freudianism* is a late example of such a coinage. A slightly different type is the verb *burke,* which came from a much-discussed series of crimes by the Scotch murderers Burke and Hara in the early nineteenth century. Burke's method was to stifle his victims as they lay in bed, using heavy clothes or a feather bed for his purpose. Literary works often contain names and places which come to stand for some idea or class of ideas. Among conspicuous examples of this are Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* and *Main Street,* Shakespeare's *Shylock* and *Romeo,* and Sheridan's *Mrs. Malaprop.* The Bible has furnished such well-known terms as a *Judas,* a *Daniel;* Greek mythology, an *Adonis,* an *Apollo,* a *Hercules,* a *Venus.*

Strictly speaking, such expressions as those described in the foregoing are not "coinages," but are the result of normal linguistic development. But, after all, some one had to be first in using each word in its finally accepted sense, and he was therefore in reality coining an expression. *Coinage,* in the more usual negative connotation of the term, is applied to words that don't succeed. Thus, whoever started the word *hooverize* was unsuccessful, just as were those who a few years back tried to invent a word to describe a person who is unkind to animals, and hit on the monstrosity *pitilacker.* It is possible too that none of the new words winning prizes in "The Wits Weekly" contest in *The Saturday Review of Literature,* August 4, 1928—such as *frillifritterer,* for one who wastes time; *glummist,* for the literary pessimist; *bigenders,* for those eager for the main chance, will be more fortunate in finding a place in our language. But it hardly becomes any of

us to scorn those who fail in what is after all a legitimate undertaking. There is and should be no closed season on word-building in English; when such a condition comes to be, our language will have ceased to be the live, growing thing it now is and always has been. However, the mistakes of those who have tried and failed should warn us to be extremely conservative in our nominations for an already richly crowded Hall of Fame.

Alien Words.—English owes thousands of its most useful words to importations from foreign tongues. Almost every language under the sun has been pillaged for the enrichment of our speech. To discuss this subject with even an approach to completeness would take more space than has been allotted in this book to the whole subject of diction. The process of borrowing from other languages still continues, but perhaps with these differences: (1) it goes on more slowly now than in many periods in the past, and (2) the tendency at present is to anglicize, or naturalize, new expressions more rapidly than formerly. It is a matter of practical concern to the student that the practice of constantly interlarding a piece of prose with quotations from Latin or French, once so common among English writers, has largely disappeared; in fact, a tendency in that direction is usually looked upon as in bad taste. We do, however, find the short, apt phrase of foreign origin still used; every one has seen in modern writing such expressions as *savoir faire, pas du tout, faux pas, entre nous, cela va sans dire, ad infinitum,* and so forth.

Trite Words.—Just why words come and go cannot always be easily explained. Sometimes it is a fashion, but more often it is something else. Words become overused, for one thing; they grow "tired," and are dropped. There is "genteel," for example. Galsworthy tells the story in one sentence, when he describes James and Emily

as coming down, "very genteel (before that word was fly-blown)." "Fly-blown!" that is the near state of some of our words today, like *lovely, flair,* and *facetious.* In his chapter on "Proud Words" in *The Outlook for American Prose,* Joseph Warren Beach writes amusingly of those words which recent authors have misused or overworked. Some of these have had "runs" for a season or so, and have then been practically dropped. Such, he feels, are "devastating," "intrigued," "poignant," all good words, but lately a bit "fly-blown."

For expressions that have lost their original freshness and spontaneity by being thus overdone we have a special term, *trite.* The ordinary words of everyday use do not become trite through repetition—verbs like to *be,* to *have,* to *go,* do not; neither do adjectives and adverbs like *large, strong, heavily, swiftly,* nor nouns like *bird, boy,* and *building;* it is the more conspicuous and striking phrase of the sort that is likely to tickle the fancy and be caught up and repeated until it becomes a mere convention— a *cliché*— that grows trite. It is perhaps safe to say that many a trite expression is on its way to becoming an archaism. Herein is illustrated one of the most interesting of all language processes: first the very popular expression, then the overused, the trite, then the obsolete, and, finally, the archaic. Thus wornout speech ever gives way to language that still retains its luster, or which at least does not offend as an obvious reminting of an old coin.

There is, of course, no way to draw a sharp line between trite and nontrite expressions. The student must learn to detect such things for himself and be always on his guard against repeating the ready-made stock phrase in his own writing. In doing this, some may find help from the following examples of what one teacher labeled as trite phraseology. It may be of interest to know that the list is selected almost entirely from one set of student themes.

Low, soft moaning
Keep the spark of life glowing
His life partner
His mind was a rapid, calculating, efficient mechanism
The jury solemnly filed out
A valley nestled between two mountains
Peaceful slumber
Fleeing from justice
Finding the feeling mutual
Sumptuous apartments
Luxuriously attired
Danced by in the arms of a tall young man
Limbs that scarcely supported her
Color drained from his face
Her senses reeled
Dawned upon her
Dashed madly
Tears filled her eyes as she raised her handkerchief
Memories long dormant
A noble deed
Depart for home
As fast as his little legs would carry him
Hurriedly retraced his steps
The late sun was casting its beams
An improvised ash-tray
As if he had lost his last friend on earth
In majestic splendor (the sun)
Enshrine in memory
Rising in majestic beauty (a mountain)
Still cold beauty (of a lake)
Field of honor
Embers smoldering on the hearth
Crystalline waters

New Words.—New words and phrases come into a language for precisely the reason that they express ideas

in a fresh way, when time-worn equivalents have been so abused as to have little or no meaning; or they come in as a result of such general and persistent use among common people that the literary folk must yield whether they will or no. Quiller-Couch has possibly set us as safe a standard as any for the adoption or rejection of new words. Inasmuch as of human discourse, he says:

> Infinitely varied as it is, so much must ever depend on who speaks, and to whom, in what mood and upon what occasion; and seeing that Literature must needs take account of all manner of writers, audiences, moods, occasions, I hold it a sin against the light to put up a warning against any word that comes to us in the fair way of use and wont (as "wire" for instance, for a telegram), even as surely as we should warn off hybrids or deliberately pedantic impostors, such as "antibody," and "picture-drome"; and that, generally, it is better to err on the side of liberty than on the side of the censor: since by the manumitting of new words we infuse new blood into a tongue of which (or we have learnt nothing from Shakespeare's audacity) our first pride should be that it is flexible, alive, capable of responding to new demands of man's untiring quest after knowledge and experience.
>
> —*On the Art of Writing.*

Special Distinctions.—There are indeed many distinctions established by custom so useful that it would seem wise for everyone ambitious for skill in language to know them. One of these relates to the use of *will* and *shall*. The usual rule is to use *shall* in the first person singular and plural, *will* in the second and third persons singular and plural, except in cases where will, desire or determination is strongly expressed. Here *will* is used in the first person, *shall* in the second and third person. (In combinations with verbs or adjectives of willing or desiring, however, the usual form is preserved—this to avoid tautology. That is, although will is implied, we say, "I shall be glad to go," and "I should like to see him." The willingness is here expressed in *glad* and *like,* and should not be re-

peated in the auxiliary verb.) Thus we say, "I shall speak," and "Shall you go?" (for the answer is to be, "Yes, I shall go," or "No, I shall not go"). But if strong determination is implied, we say, "I *will* speak whether you wish it or not," and "He *shall* be hanged this time." An instance of fine discrimination in the use of the verb is to be found in the following:

> . . . I will be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice. . . . I am in earnest. . . . I will not equivocate—I will not excuse. . . . I will not retreat a single inch—*and I will be heard.*
>
> —William Lloyd Garrison.

Napoleon in conference with Josephine informs her that she is to be divorced, that she is to make the overtures toward the divorce herself, and is, moreover, to help him arrange a match with Marie Louisa of Austria. Josephine declares, "I cannot—O, I will not!" At which Napoleon replies, fiercely, "But you *shall!* And from your past experience you may know that what I say I mean." [1]

It may be argued that the use of *will* and *shall, would* and *should,* might logically be treated under the head of grammar—inasmuch as they are inflections of the verb. However, the use here discussed has little to do with grammar; it is a matter of useful distinction in meaning which, though there is little historical warrant for it, men and women of fine discrimination in their speech habits are now making. This is not, then, a case for the grammarians, but for the writers and speakers themselves: it is merely a problem of effective diction.

Whether or not Napoleon and Josephine would have used just these words in a conversation we need not argue; it is at least certain that for the cultivated English reader Hardy has made a differentiation that aids greatly in conveying just the shade of meaning he desired. It would seem obvious that any device which would make possible

[1] Thomas Hardy, *The Dynasts,* II, p. 2.

such a distinction is justifiable and should be defended on the ground of strict utility. After all, we have but one real excuse for the study of language, and that is to learn as fully as we are able the possibilities for accurate and complete communication that lie in words. To that end we shall permit no quibbles to stand in the way of our searching out and using such language as will best enable us to convey our thought to others in the most expressive way; for, as one of our critics has recently said, "Good writing is not a structure of pretty words admired by the critical, it is apt words—which is to say, pertinent ideas." The important thing always is the *right* word or phrase. Flaubert pushed his emphasis upon the exact word—the *mot juste*—to an extreme perhaps, yet his attitude is on the whole a very practical one:

> Whatever may be the thing which one wishes to say, there is but one word for expressing it; only one verb to animate it, but one adjective to qualify it. It is essential to search for this verb, for this adjective, until they are discovered, and never to be satisfied with anything else.

It is, to be sure, not always easy to find the right word. Flaubert spent his life in an agonized search for the exact phrase. F. M. Ford relates of Conrad, who was especially painstaking in matters of diction: "The writer remembers Conrad spending nearly a whole day over one word in two or three sentences of proofs for the Blackwood volume called *Youth*. It was two words, perhaps—*serene* and *azure*. Certainly it was azure. 'And she crawled on, do or die, in the serene weather. The sky was a miracle of purity, a miracle of azure.'" [1] And Dante confessed much as to his own method and the secret of his power, when he wrote pictorially, "Poetry, and the language proper for it, is a regular 'panther quest,' an elaborate and painful toil."

[1] *Joseph Conrad*, p. 170.

Now if the masters must thus labor, how can the lesser ones of us who would use words well hope to escape without some pain? Decisively, we cannot. But the end is worth the effort, is it not? To write just one letter that our friends will cherish and admire as a beautiful or wise or clever expression of thought is worth a lifetime of effort. That is a thing which is really our own; it is of greater price than money, or houses, or land, for it carries upon it the stamp of our mind, and spirit, and our real inner selves, the precious seal of individuality as distinguished from mere externals which we share in common with the world at large.

In his customary wise and sane fashion, Professor Genung sums up the problem of the choice of words. "Use no expression thoughtlessly," he says, "or merely because it is current, but from your own recognition of its fitness, plainly because, whether new or old, it represents your own thought."

It must be admitted that tastes and purposes differ greatly, and different writers aim at different sorts of audiences. Walter Pater would have scorned to take Emerson's advice about common language. Pater consciously wrote for scholars and urged others to do so; and no one will deny that he wrote prose of beauty and power, nor that he has always had an enthusiastic, though eclectic, audience. It would be interesting, too, to go through the paragraphs in which Emerson advocates in his best "tones of thunder" the speech of the common man and pick out the words that only a fair scholar would know. But truths at best are relative, and can be expressed only approximately; moreover, as Emerson himself once said, "absolute consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds." People who write must not be told too much just how to express their own particular ideas. And perhaps, after all, the one certain rule that can be safely urged upon the

young writer is that he should always select the words that are best fitted to convey the exact meaning intended.

EXERCISES

1. Point out the more suggestive words and phrases in the following paragraph. How much of the effect is secured by simple homely words of everyday association? How much by specific and concrete words? Are there any figures of speech? Underline the words and phrases that suggest pictures. Note the proportion of short to long words. Comment upon the use of *be* in the phrase *to relax and to be.* Would its equivalent *exist* satisfy you as well?

> To sleep under the stars, to live with the river that sings as it flows, to sit by the embers of morning or evening fire and just dream away time and earnestness, to gather sticks to keep the old pot a-boiling, to laze into the company of strangers and slip out of their company in time, to make friends with bird and beast, and watch insects and grubs—to relax and to be; that's my idea of tramping. The blessed nights full of dew or rain and breeze, the full length of a ferny bed that Mother Earth provides—don't they attract, don't they pull one away from the town! And then the day, with celestial, unadvertised, unpaid-for sunshine or shade, on the rocks, on the tufty hills, beside tiny springs or stream on the stairs of the mountains!

2. In rewriting his *Tenebris Interluctum,* James Elroy Flecker changed the first stanza from

> Once a poor song-bird that had lost her way
> Sang down in hell upon a blackened bough
> Till all the lazy ghosts remembered how
> The forest trees stood up against the day

[to

> A linnet who had lost her way
> Sang on a blackened bough in Hell,
> Till all the ghosts remembered well
> The trees, the wind, the golden day.

Has Mr. Flecker increased the suggestive power of his lines? If so, how?

3. Transfer the following general terms into specific equivalents:

vehicle	machinery	fuel
animals	cooking utensils	furniture
china	mountains	painting
tools	precious stones	fun
stock	devastation	party

4. Transform the abstract ideas contained in the following sentences into concrete expression:

1. Cæsar was ambitious.
2. The stubbornness of George III was largely responsible for the loss of the American colonies.
3. Great floods are disastrous.
4. Idle time is ruinous.

5. Write ~~out~~ the connotations these words have for you. Can you trace the source of any of these attached meanings?

1. Bleak	14. Gleamed	27. Chortle
2. Scanty	15. Frugality	28. Chow
3. Cougar	16. Red-hot	29. Be-thwack
4. Attila	17. Grim	30. Flash
5. Hindenburg	18. Lissom	31. Snuggle
6. The Lone Eagle	19. Prattle	32. Sinister
7. Free thought	20. Valley Forge	33. Nestled
8. Meager	21. Soissons	34. Somaliland
9. Splash	22. Beetle	35. Grin
10. Glint	23. Hyssop	36. Sandino
11. Gloating	24. Pasteur	37. Ice
12. Bedraggled	25. Cockroach	38. Coca-cola
13. Blithe	26. Scarab	39. Loam

6. Make a list of words that you find full of distasteful suggestions. Try to define what is wrong with each.

Make a similar list of words that suggest pleasant things to you. Tell what each connotes.

7. In the interests of specific suggestion, one should avoid, says Herbert Spencer, writing such a sentence as this,

In proportion as the manners, customs, and amusements of a nation are cruel and barbarous, the regulations of their penal code will be severe.

And in place of it we should write

In proportion as men delight in battles, bull fights, and combats of gladiators, will they punish by hanging, burning, and the rack.

Analyze the changes.

8. Rewrite the following sentences, substituting specific expressions for the general:

It was pleasant to see the food spread out on the grass before us.

The room was cluttered with articles of every sort.

Little Mary was delighted with the parade; the animals especially pleased her.

9. Show the difference in connotation in the following sentences:

So far the postal system had remained untouched by the reform *mania* of the generation.

So far the postal system had remained untouched by the reform *spirit* of the generation.

10. With the help of your thesaurus and your dictionaries, find how the following words and phrases stand with reference to good usage:

lief	*tour de force*
pragmatical	*chic*
fire-eater	*de jure*
to buss	*amour propre*
larrikin	improsperous
increpation	hoodooed
castigate	trek
barratrous	tantivy
mundane	barratry
mad (for angry)	stag dinner
vim	let off
welkin	end-seat hog

clever (for good-natured)
directly (for immediately)
map (for face)
block (for head)
coddle
malfeasance
white (for honest)
square (for honest)
knocker
pickthank
'sdeath
acclimate
ex officio
shunt
put oneself forward
kill the fatted calf
keep open house
crow over
paint the town red
an eye to the main chance
a bad break
gold-digger
lounge-lizard
yon and yonder
to peter out (to run out)
petered (in the sense of wearied)
the glad hand
bang-up good time
he's a brick
give an inch and take an ell
fishy (story)
get your goat
stick up for
to show him up
haul over the coals
calf love
crosspatch
a thick skin

Figures of Speech

11. Study the following excerpts as examples of figures of speech. Which are the most effective? Why?

(a) Furze is calling on Mary Viner when old Colonel Sykes intrudes. Of the two, Furze obviously has the more right: "He was twenty-five years younger; he had come in the spring of the year to this April woman; he made the colonel look like a withered old chanticleer." (Deeping, *Doomsday*)

(b) "For the memory of another is like a ship which one sees coming down a bay—the hull and the sails separating from the distance and from the outlying islands and capes—charged with freight and cutting open the waves, addressing itself in increasingly clear outlines to the impatient eyes on the waterfront; which, before it reaches the shore, grows ghostly and sinks in the sea; and one has to wait for the tides to cast on the beach, fragment by fragment, the awarded cargo." (Wescott, *The Grandmothers*)

(c) "When she saw the lady's tears,
Anguish went to her heart like a knife."

(d) "The foamy-necked boat glides like a bird." (*Beowulf*)

(e) "Thwackum, whose meditations were full of birch, exclaimed . . . against this wicked levity." (Fielding, *Tom Jones*)

(f) Phrases are the molecules of literature as words are its atoms, and it is but some slight difference of molecular arrangement that makes the difference between champagne and cider.

(g) "Oh, the good smack of truth on the tongue again,
After a winter of lies!"

—Millay, *The King's Henchman.*

(h) In answer to an appeal to concede something to the more vulgar taste for the sake of popularity, the boy Lafcadio Hearn declared: "I shall stick to my pedestal of faith in literary possibilities like an Egyptian Colossus with a broken nose, seated solemnly in the gloom of my own originality." (*Life and Letters*)

12. In the following, one young man explains to another why he reads and what he gets out of books. He makes his meaning clear through simile and metaphor. Try a similar explanation of something you do habitually, making use of figures to aid toward clearness.

"Why d'you read then?"

"Partly for pleasure, because it's a habit and I'm just as uncomfortable if I don't read as if I don't smoke, and partly to know myself. When I read a book I seem to read it with my eyes only, but now and then I come across a passage, perhaps only a phrase, which has a meaning for *me,* and it becomes part of me; I've got out of the book all that's any use to me, and I can't get anything more if I read it a dozen times. You see, it seems to me, one's like a closed bud, and most of what one reads and does has no effect at all; but there are certain things that have a peculiar significance for one, and they open a petal; and the petals open one by one; and at last the flower is there."

—Maugham, *Of Human Bondage.*

13. When Anne Parrish mentions a hat trimmed with tan wings like "two slices of cold chicken," she is using a possibly accurate

comparison as to color, but she achieves a highly unfortunate effect: the suggestion is odious. What similar unpleasant comparisons have you seen? Watch for such unsuccessful figures of speech in your reading.

14. "I like a little allegorical speech now and then," declares Trader Horn. "Used to excess, 'twill lose its effect. But chosen with an eye, it'll form a spot-light in any narrative." Aloysius Horn does not always speak as wisely and truly as he ought, but here he is talking good sense. Read a chapter from one of Conrad's, Dickens's, Walpole's, or Thackeray's novels for figures that form a "spot-light" in the narrative. A chapter from one of Romain Rolland's books will prove a good hunting ground for such expressions. Keep your eyes open in other reading for figures that seem used to excess, and so lose effect.

15. Is it better to say,

> There used to be a little peace about this house,

or

> There was formerly a little peace about this house?

> I was very poor,

or

> I was very weak financially?

16. Would you change any of the wording in this extract? Why?

> Miss Perkins slowly retraced her steps, but by the time she reached the massive door Blake had pulled himself up and had departed. She proceeded over to the closet, procured her wraps, and slowly left the room.

The following exercises should be supplemented by dozens of others of like nature that the alert mind will set for itself.

17. In one of Stephen Crane's stories, three Irishmen have gone into a saloon and ordered beer. As they drink, they watch all that goes on. "When anything *transpired* they discussed it with dazzling frankness," writes Crane. Look up *transpired* in the dictionary. Is it used correctly? If not, what would you use? Make a list of possible choices, and give a reason for your selection.

18. In the following there is one impossible blunder in diction. Find it. What word would you substitute?

With the laying of turf on the playing field of Michigan's new Stadium, and the pouring of tons of concrete daily into the forms that are to shape the great bowl, construction work that gave so little promise last fall is rapidly rounding to completion; and Ohio Wesleyan, which plays here in the opening game next fall, will step into a complete and finished structure.

The giant drain, which is to take care of the flow of water from the interior of the structure, has been completed, and on the east side, construction has begun on the locker rooms that will lie under the seats. Puffing cement mixers are working long hours, and from the apparent progress of the work nothing short of a miracle can prevent the use of the field next fall.

What other words would you change?

19. Point out the lapses in diction in the following sentences. In each case suggest a better word; rewrite the sentence if necessary.

This was the last chance the wife had given him to repair his delinquent ways.

Mr. Dorsey enhances his thoughts by incidental comments inspired by sly wit.

He expressed skepticism in the North (meaning disbelief in the possibilities of the North).

What could be more gruesome than an imperfectly rounded-out individual?

But Eustacia, walking along one of the dim paths of the heath, was not concerned with the discomfort of the day. She never took account of the weather, never noticed externals, but was ever occupied with herself.

No one had been able to lay a finger on the keynote of Irene's character.

"Could I take you to your destination," politely inquired the hero of the heroine, "or would you prefer to avert your course and stroll down to see the new wooden pump in the park?"

The young lady of the story sees the man coming down the moonlit path with another girl on his arm, and "A feeling of limpidness came over her. She could neither raise her arms nor move an inch."

One look at his expression was enough.

At two-fifty-five the Emerson team entered donned in bathrobes.

His face perturbed Dot.

The night passed hurriedly.

20. As opposed to the inaccurate and feeble usages illustrated in the preceding sentences, the following extracts show the happy effects of apt, vivid words and phrases in the proper places.

Riceyman Square, says Arnold Bennett, lay "frowsily supine in Sunday indolence." In *The Sun Also Rises* Ernest Hemingway speaks unforgettably of "the spilling open of horses in bull-fighting." In such description, as Elizabeth Drew says in *The Modern Novel,* there is "a stabbing sense of reality."

Some one has told us that Samuel Johnson scorned to waste comment on "unresisting imbecility," which phrase reminds one of Walter Raleigh's comment upon the "invincible ignorance of the masses."

Edna Ferber speaks of an unnecessary rain as "a redundant rain."

Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond and must be polished ere he shines. (Dryden)

A little marmoset of a man (James Boyd, describing the boatman in *Drums*).

The German chairmaker, a little spectacled dormouse, burrowed vigorously through the slow throng. (*Drums*)

21. Note the effect of the homely old word *swinking* in this sentence. Make a list of such words you come across in your reading during the next six weeks.

Look far enough, and it means muscular toil, that swinking of the ruder man which supports all the complex structure of our life.

—Gissing, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft.*

22. The following expressions creep into the language of many an unwary student. They are not in good use, and perhaps never will be; but they are especially treacherous because they seem right by analogy, and therefore need especial attention. Do you use any of them? Look these words up in your dictionary:

Enthuse, as in "I didn't much enthuse over it."

Dark-complected, as in "Fleur was a dark-complected, beautiful girl."

To my estimation, as in "To my estimation, Richard's decision was a wise one."

23. Criticize the following word combinations from the point of view of euphony and general fitness:

Thrall Ball a Great Success (newspaper headline).
I must leave your service or I cannot marry Mary.
The crew grew restless.
Sanin's head really reeled.
Airing Aristotle.
Without relying on actual action.
She turned her blissful, blushing face full upon him.
We were shown the great light that shone out over the sea every night.

24. Arnold Bennett criticizes a sentence in *The Times* which read:

> Anthony Trollope died in the December of 1882, and in the following year a fatal, perhaps an irreparable, blow to his reputation was struck by the publication of his autobiography.

"The conceit of a blow which in addition to being fatal is perhaps also irreparable is diverting," declares Mr. Bennett.

Here is a protest against tautological and otherwise useless words that mar effectiveness. The following sentences are in one way or another illustrative of verbiage. Point out the errors and correct them.

(a) In some cases maybe the manner of doing, or the action itself is done purposely to be a bit harsh on the recipients.

(b) It is very difficult to choose from the heterogeneous potpourri of books (Student's theme).

(c) A young couple get caught in a storm and become alarmed.—"They knew they must be in the very middle of the vortex of the hurricane."

(d) The wind in the nearby olive trees stopped to listen in anticipation of hearing the words of the man.

25. The following contain words whose connotation is not in harmony with the sense, or tone, or movement of the remainder of the sentence. How would you correct them?

(a) The two men strolled on with the rushing, swaying throng bent on pleasure for the spring evening.

(b) On the hillside sat a lone, happy man.

(c) A shiny brass cuspidor nestling just under the edge of the desk struck his eye.

Chapter VIII

THE LONGER COMPOSITION

PLANNING THE THEME

But, before seeking the order in which to present thoughts, the writer must form another more general and more rigid order where only large views and principal ideas should enter. It is by fixing their places in this preliminary plan that he circumscribes the subject and comes to know its extent; . . .

This plan is not indeed the style, but it is the foundation; . . . without it, the best writer will lose his way, and his pen will run on unguided and by hazard will make uncertain strokes and incongruous figures. . . .

It is from lack of plan, lack of reflection on his purpose, that a man of sheer intelligence finds himself embarrassed and does not know at what point to begin to write. He perceives, all at the same time, a great number of ideas; and since he has neither compared them nor subordinated them, nothing leads him to prefer any of them to the others; so he remains in perplexity.—COMTE DE BUFFON.

IN A preceding chapter the paragraph has been described as a unit of arranged thinking. The longer composition is merely a larger unit of arranged thinking. But in this larger structure there is naturally a greater intricacy and diversity, such as would logically result from the combination of various smaller unities into a harmonious whole. It is therefore obvious that certain special problems arise in the writing of a longer theme—whether it is to consist of two, three, or fifty paragraphs—which need hardly concern us in the construction of the shorter, less complex unit: problems of assembling specific materials, of intelligent plan, of effective selection and management; of good beginnings, good middles, good endings.

I

The Problem of Assembling Materials

The steps to be taken in preparing for a longer theme will vary according to the exact nature and the extent of the project in hand.

There are subjects which one can write upon by simply drawing from what is already in his head. Thus a football player who proposed to write a theme of from three to six paragraphs on the subject *How I Made the Team* would have no use for books in preparation for his writing. He would need to think, and analyze, and outline; and perhaps his thinking and analysis should be more rigid and thorough than he would at first suppose—just what *was* the secret of making that team, anyway?—but he would not need to read.

Many subjects, however, require pointed, systematic reading. Even for works of fiction, authors frequently read much. It is said that Bulwer-Lytton prepared for his *Rienzi* by three years of intensive research; and one can be sure that many modern books, such as André Maurois' *Disraeli,* Sandburg's *Prairie Years,* and Emil Ludwig's *Napoleon,* have required the most exhaustive preparatory study. To cover a topic in history or economics or literature, the student must often read many books and magazine articles. He may also need to consult encyclopedias, biographical dictionaries, and other references. This means that he must know how to use a library and must understand the fine arts of making and using bibliographies and taking serviceable notes. These matters are of such importance that the writers of this book have reserved a separate chapter for their special treatment (see Chapter X).

Some topics require less reading but more *observing.*

An afternoon on a park bench has furnished many writers with specific data for a story or an essay. An evening of observant, reflective watching on a city street will give more first-hand material, with the real pith of life in it, than could be written out in many days. Observation with a definite aim in mind is unquestionably one of the most effective means of preparing to write certain kinds of themes. The fine nature essays of Burroughs and Fabre, and William Beebe's fascinating accounts of strange life and happenings in sea and jungle, are the results of knowing how to observe and to note down in mind and book the significant things that cross one's path. The student who cares about birds can, to be sure, learn much from books about the thrush of which he may be planning to write, and he should read these books as part of his preparation; but he will get his best material by going out into the woods and fields to study his living subject in its native environment. This is the thing that will infuse into his writing the thrill of authenticity, the vitality and atmosphere of outdoor birddom. It is such observation that makes the account of the traveler who has "really been there" so interesting. It is what gives the nature essays of Beebe and Burroughs, the articles of war correspondents like Richard Harding Davis and H. M. Tomlinson, their piquancy and charm. It would be difficult to overemphasize the great value of observing as a means of specific preparation.

In *talk* many writers find much of the rough stuffs for their completed compositions. Some of our successful story-writers, for instance, are known to get their best materials from long conversations with men and women of many and varied experiences. When Tennyson, a close and accurate student of men and nature, wanted to put into his poems bits of color from lands he had not seen, he was accustomed to question long and minutely those

who knew the facts, until he had a clear idea of the objects he wished to describe.

These talks of Tennyson's were a form of *interview*. The interview is a productive source of capital for the writer. In fact, when we consider the constant use of the interview for newspaper stories, for reports of various sorts, and for "human interest" articles in the magazines, it would seem safe to say that there is no method of gathering material more common, and none more useful. Data upon innumerable subjects can be had only through this method. You want to know how students spend their time, or what professors eat, how much they sleep, what is the average size of their families; you want to know what lawyers think of Clarence Darrow; or you are interested to learn the new method of manufacturing nonrust nails in the factory down on Cheever Street, the per capita cost of living in a workingman's family, or the way the poor farm is run out on Washington Avenue. The interview is in each case the most, in many cases the only, practicable way to get these facts.

II

The Problem of Plan—Limiting the Subject, Analyzing, Outlining

Limiting the Subject.—When one is to write a paper the task which first confronts him is the choice and limitation of his subject. Let us make a few suppositions about an average person. Doubtless observing, talking, reading, and first-hand experience have given him interest in and knowledge of various subjects. The newspapers, carrying the usual accounts of crime, must have fixed certain facts and theories in his mind. His more sustained reading may have led him into the field of biography; he may have read a late account of the life of Aaron Burr.

Perhaps he is fond of boating, and has by experience learned a lot about boats; perhaps a recent book or movie has aroused his interest in the famous clipper ships. Possibly he has a taste for art, and a recent exhibit has directed his attention to etching. But even a fair knowledge of these general subjects is not sufficient in itself; one cannot start writing about crime, or the clipper ship, or etching, or Aaron Burr without first fixing upon certain objectives. What particular thing shall be brought out about these general subjects? What shall the particular object of this essay be?

A *general subject* is usually only a field for investigation. There have, of course, been attempts to collect all that is known of a subject, or to assemble the more important facts in a field of knowledge, into a single work; and such attempts have given us the encyclopedias and dictionaries of horticulture, chemistry, classical antiquities, and other subjects, which are to be found in every reference library. But the writing of encyclopedias hardly comes within the range of the student. Neither does the writing of other books. Most of us confine our writing to papers of essay length,—papers varying from a few hundred to a few thousand words.

Because we cannot in an essay tell everything that there is to tell about a subject, we must devote our efforts to a particular part of the subject; furthermore, we must choose a part of a subject that can be treated adequately in the space which we have been allotted. Because it would be impossible to tell everything about crime in an essay of two thousand or four thousand words, we choose a much smaller objective; and if the theme is to be only three to five hundred words long, our objective must be still smaller. Here are some of the possible *special subjects* which may be drawn from the *general subject*, "crime":

The causes of crime
The increase in crime since the War
Capital punishment as a deterrent from crime
Uncertainty of conviction as a factor in crime
The political factor in the punishment of crime—the Sacco-Vanzetti case
Advertising against crime

The special subject, the objective of the essay, having been decided upon, the writer is now faced with the necessity of filling up the gaps in his information. He reads, secures interviews, visits institutions, and is as thorough as opportunity and time permit. His material should be jotted down upon cards, with accurate notations as to source; if from books or magazines, the full title, author, volume, and page should be taken. As explained in a later chapter, it is necessary to distinguish between direct quotation and paraphrase. The utmost care must be taken to give to the paper a tone of authenticity and accuracy, and to prevent any possibility of a charge of illegitimate borrowing. When the student has thus assembled his material he must analyze it.

Analyzing and Outlining.—The importance of thinking a subject through has been emphasized in a previous chapter (see Chapter IV). This is a process which logically follows—which, indeed, should to a large extent accompany—the gathering of materials. To think one's subject through in an orderly, systematic way is to analyze it. The purposes of analysis in preparation for writing a theme are: first, to find what one really has in the way of material for his composition, to discover whether it has significant meaning, whether there is enough of it, whether it is really what one wants and needs; second, to organize it, with its logically connected parts in juxtaposition, its subordinate and principal ideas in the right relationship to each other.

In getting a thorough grasp of any subject we always

go through two typical intellectual processes: analysis and synthesis. Complex subjects can never be grasped in their entirety. They must always be taken apart and studied in detail. We have to go through much the same processes as does the small boy who takes apart the old clock to learn the secret of its mechanism. And, like a mechanically-minded boy, we ought to be able either to group the parts according to their characteristics or to reassemble the parts into something that will hold together and run; something that satisfies a want—that fulfils a purpose. In this manner the world's knowledge has been increased, —by taking apart, classifying, and putting together. Wise men have taken apart unintelligible complexities, material and spiritual, and have constructed from them things that are understood and can be controlled—that are therefore useful. That is what the chemist does with physical substances, and that is what the lawyer does with evidence. The taking apart is called *analysis* and the putting together is called *synthesis*. These terms apply alike to physical objects and to ideas.

Analysis is a partial or complete separation of an idea, system, or thing into its component elements. If the division is complete and systematic, we call it a *logical division;* if it is impossible to make a completely systematic division, we must be content with a partition. In the analysis of literature we sometimes have to be satisfied with a *literary partition,* a division which is not wholly complete. The chemist is able to make what for ordinary purposes is a complete analysis or division; in geology, botany, and zoölogy elaborate divisions and classifications have been made; in the English language all words have been divided into the eight parts of speech. All the languages of the earth have been divided into families, ours belonging to the Aryan or Indo-European. This great family is itself divided into eight classes: Indo-Iranian, Armenian, Greek, Albanian, Italic, Celtic, Balto-

Slavic, and Teutonic or Germanic.[1] The Germanic is divided on a geographical basis into:

(a) East Germanic (Gothic)
(b) North Germanic (Icelandic, Norse, Swedish, Danish)
(c) West Germanic (English, Frisian, Franconian, Low German, High German)

On a time basis the English language is divided into three periods: Old English, Middle English, Modern English. Each of these divisions can again be divided on the basis of dialects: thus, Old English falls into Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish. This division, if put into the form of a topical outline, will give us a bird's-eye view of an immense and intricate subject; we get not only a comprehension of the number of parts, but we learn what the relationship is between the parts.

The separation of a complex subject into its elements is necessary for the learner as well as for the writer. It is half of our thinking. A student who can make an analysis (*i.e.,* division or outline) of the course which he has just completed really has mastered that body of knowledge: he knows its important divisions and what their relations are to each other.

But it must not be supposed that the processes of analysis should be limited to large and complex subjects. Even very small subjects require thoughtful analysis before one can talk about them intelligently. Were you ever asked to write a description of the song of a familiar bird or the laugh of a friend, only to find that you had really never given either of these things enough attention to name its peculiar qualities? Or did you ever set out to write an essay on such a topic as *A Friend,* and discover yourself unable to get anywhere until you had sat down and thought the matter out? It is the small thing, the thing nearest to us, that often needs the most pointed analysis.

[1] Taken from KRAPP, *Modern English, Its Growth and Present Use.*

With most young writers this fact needs double emphasis: it is easy enough to see that a history of the Civil War must be preceded by extended analytical study; it is not always so obvious that a three-paragraph theme on such a subject as *What Are Good Manners?* needs the same type—if not the same volume—of systematic reflection. The principle and the essential method remain the same, for the large and the small subject alike.

When one begins the study of a subject,—for instance, the American government,—he is confronted with a mass and complexity of material which are utterly incomprehensible until divided and classified. Teachers and writers of books know this well, and there is always on their part an effort to divide the subject under consideration into units which can easily be grasped, and to present these divisions in an order which seems easiest to comprehend. The late James Bryce gives an excellent example of the logical division of a complex subject in his book, *The American Commonwealth*.[1] Bryce, an Englishman, afterward ambassador to the United States, gathered his material during a period of eighteen years,—by reading and by travel in America. In his introduction he analyzes the material thus:

> There are three main things that one wishes to know about a national commonwealth, *viz.*, its framework and constitutional machinery, the methods by which it is worked, the forces which move it and direct its course. It is natural to begin with the first of these. Accordingly, I begin with the government; and as the powers of government are two-fold, being vested partly in the National or Federal authorities and partly in the States, I begin with the National government, whose structure presents less difficulty to European minds, because it resembles the national government in each of their own countries. Part I therefore contains an account of the several Federal authorities, the President, Congress, the Courts of Law. It describes the relations of the National

[1] Bryce, James, *The American Commonwealth*, 2 vols., 2nd ed., The Macmillan Company, 1889.

or central power to the several States. It discusses the nature of the Constitution as a fundamental supreme law, and shows how this stable and rigid instrument has been in a few points expressly, in many others tacitly and half-unconsciously, modified.

A paragraph is then devoted to explaining the content of each of the other five parts. His plan is as follows:

(A) Mr. Bryce is going to present to his readers the structure; (B) he will show how the structure works; (C) he will explain the social forces which drive the political machine. He will begin with the structure, and this part falls into two great divisions: (I) national; (II) state and local. In each group there are powers: (a) executive, (b) legislative, (c) judicial. Put this in the form of a topical outline and we have:

A. The framework and constitutional machinery of the Government
    I. The National Government
        a. The Executive Branch
            1. The President
            2. The Cabinet
        b. The Legislative Branch
            1. The Senate
            2. The House
        c. The Judicial Branch—The Federal Courts
    II. The State and Local Governments
B. The method by which it is worked
C. The social forces which move the machine

A very serviceable plan for a piece of writing on a much smaller scale than Mr. Bryce's is the following, used by Professor Rollo Brown in describing the teaching of grammar in the French schools.[1]

[1] Chapter IV in *How the French Boy Learns to Write,* Harvard University Press.

I. Introductory remarks—As a supplement to practice in composition, real grammar is taught, —a grammar that treats openly, and without apology, such principles as render language relations both intelligible and serviceable

II. The predominant purpose in teaching grammar—a mastery of the tools of everyday expression

III. The early beginning
   1. Time—pupil begins grammar in earliest years, at six
   2. Advantages—pupil learns to look upon grammar as a natural part of his equipment

IV. Simplification
   1. In subject matter
   2. In classroom exercises
   3. In nomenclature

V. The close relation of grammar to other work
   1. Through internal arrangements of class periods
   2. Through oral exercises
   3. Through the use of complete passages of prose
   4. Through emphasis on the sentence

VI. The influence of the inductive method

VII. Historical grammar
   1. Method
   2. Value
      a. It gives the pupil a language background
      b. It gives him a just notion of the nature of language
      c. The study arouses a healthy interest in language problems

When an examination is made of such outlines, it will be discovered that the main heads and the subheads under them are the result of good thinking; that the field under investigation has been systematically divided into sections which can be conveniently considered, and that these parts have been arranged into a sequence according to their relations to each other and to the reader. Mr. Bryce divided his subject, the American government, into structure, method of working, and forces which make it work. Each of these had in turn to be subdivided because it was large and complex. The framework or structure (A) he divided territorially (I. National, and II. Local), and these parts he again divided according to function [into (a) executive, (b) legislative, and (c) judicial]. A brief examination will show that Professor Brown had an equally good basis for his divisions.

Structure, function, power, geographical location, habitat, size, age, historical period, season, time of day, are typical bases for dividing a subject for study or for presentation. An old but useful method or system of division is bifurcation or dichotomy—a dividing into two on the bases of true or false, like or unlike; a separating of the sheep from the goats.

$$\text{Language}: \begin{cases} \text{Present usage} \begin{cases} \text{national} \begin{cases} \text{reputable} \\ \text{not-reputable} \end{cases} \\ \text{not-national} \end{cases} \\ \text{not-present} \end{cases}$$

By dichotomy one can reduce the universal term "language" through various classes until he gets one which answers his purpose. In the foregoing we have eliminated the "goats" and have only words in good usage left —those which are present, national, and reputable.

This division is logically accurate, because it can be made exhaustive and because there is no overlapping of divisions; but it is less useful than a more complete division, because one class is always characterized nega-

tively as "not national" or "not reputable." Such a division as the following gives more information:

Language: { Present usage / obsolete / obsolescent / archaic } { national / provincial / local } { reputable / barbarous / improper } { learned / popular }

It will be seen that division is an orderly process of thought, and that it must follow certain laws of thinking. These laws may be stated as follows:

1. *The division must be exhaustive;* the classes, with their subdivisions, must completely cover the field under investigation.
2. *The divisions must be mutually exclusive;* there must be no overlapping of the main divisions; the subdivisions must also be entirely separate.
3. *The division must be made upon a single basis or principle.* Thus, if there are three main divisions, two of them cannot be made on a geographical basis and the third upon a time basis. (But subdivision I need not be redivided on the same basis as II and III are redivided.)
4. *The divisions must be placed in a suitable order:* according to size, contiguity, cause and effect, etc., so that the reader or hearer can pass without effort from one to the other.

These general facts of analysis, hard and abstruse though they may at first appear, are of basic importance in an approach to the organization of one's material for a paper—even though that paper is to be fairly brief. As a preliminary to writing, analysis has, for its large object, to divide and group material into its logical units. Imperfect and slipshod analysis will thus result in a faulty plan, which in turn will show itself in an irrational piece of writing.

Commercial Bindings
1. leather. 5. metal.
2. cloth.
3. Paper

Suppose a student is to write an explanation of the art of bookmaking, and decides to use the following outline:

A. Quartos
B. Octavos
C. Modern examples of book-making
D. Leather-backed books
   1. Of the seventeenth century
   2. In the British Museum

This would not make a good essay. One sees at a glance that the writer has failed to make a logical, coherent plan for his work. If we test this outline by the principles of division we have just been discussing, we find that it violates not one, but all of them. (1) The plan does not cover the ground proposed: it would probably take a book to do that. In this case, the writer does not even stick to a given line of thought; he obviously has not carefully limited his subject. (2) The divisions and the subdivisions are not mutually exclusive: modern examples are mostly octavos; some are quartos; not a few are leather-backed. The subdivisions of "D" overlap: there are many seventeenth-century leather-backed books in the British Museum. (3) The division is not made upon a single basis or principle: "A" and "B" are divisions made according to the number of book leaves which were printed upon a single sheet of paper—eight (hence octavo) or four (hence quarto); "C" introduces a criterion of time and quality; "D" the sort of binding. Any one of these factors—page, size, age, might be used as a principle upon which to make a division or classification; but the use of more than one basis in forming classes supposedly of the same rank shows a lack of systematic thought. An informal partition is often sufficient for an essay, but every one capable of logical thought must learn to make a correct division. (4) Finally, the divisions are not arranged according to an orderly plan. On the contrary, the writer

has merely put down his ideas as they have come to him, with no regard for logic or for his reader's sense of logic —proceeding neither from the general to the particular, from the particular to the general, from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from effect to cause, nor according to any other rule of natural sequence. The formal outline in such a case becomes a test for clear and valid analysis.

The outline is a natural step in working toward a completed theme. For one cannot think a subject through, imaginatively projecting it into the organic form it is to assume, without going through the essential processes of outlining. Just when to begin the tangible operation of setting this mental outline down on paper is difficult to say. Often it is a help to do it in the earliest stages of preparation, changing the details as ideas evolve and define themselves clearly in the mind.

The formal written outline may be long or short, detailed or general, according to the needs of the writer. The formal outline is, after all, only a prop and a reminder. The ordered headings are but indications of the arrangement of the more fully developed thought held in suspension in the mind as the writer works. The outline, important as it is, should therefore never be mistaken for the real thing; that is, the outline is but a convenient series of signposts to aid the mind in keeping to the path it has already laid out for itself. A student who had gathered materials and had thought enough about his subject might put down on paper something like the following outline to assist in writing his paper:

The Causes of Crime

I. Introductory remarks
   1. Present attitude toward the criminal—he is possibly a sick person who needs treatment

2. Scientific approaches to crime—psychology, psychiatry, physiology

II. Heredity as a factor in crime
   1. Insanity
   2. Feeblemindedness
   3. Psychopathy
   4. Temper

III. Environment as a factor in crime
   1. Home influences
      a. Type of home
      b. Type of family
   2. Outside influences
      a. Neighborhood
      b. Companions
         1′. The "Gang"
         2′. Others
   3. Amusements, reading matter, etc.
      a. The movies
      b. Newspapers, tabloids, novels
   4. Other factors
      a. Alcohol
      b. Drugs and stimulants
      c. Women

The Form of an Outline.—As may be observed from the preceding, the headings and subheadings of an outline may be in words, phrases, or sentences. When mere words or phrases are used, the outline is called a *topical* outline; when sentences are used, it is called an *analytical* or *sentence* outline. The first type shows the structure of the paper, but gives little information as to actual content; the second shows the structure and at the same time gives a summary of the contents.

Logic requires that parallel heads in an outline shall be in parallel structure. Thus, one would not write, for a paper on *Causes of Crime:*

I. Heredity as a factor in crime
   1. Insanity
   2. In the form of feeblemindedness
   3. Psychopathic
   4. Temper may be a cause

II. Environment is a large influence in crime, etc.

He would, rather, frame his outline after some logical pattern, such as:

I. Heredity as a factor in crime
   1. Insanity
   2. Feeblemindedness
   3. Psychopathy
   4. Temper

II. Environment as a factor in crime

In other words, the principle of parallel structure, as outlined in Chapter VI, should prevail in constructing outlines.

One of the most difficult problems in writing is to arrange ideas and facts in the best order, so grouping the parts that they combine into a logical and harmonious organic whole. In preparing to write a theme a student will usually find that his ideas come to him in a more or less unorganized way. He approaches the day of writing with a notebook filled with all sorts of jottings—ideas, facts, quotations—but all a bit jumbled, unassorted. Even after he has gone through his material and extracted what seem to him to be the important points, there still remain the problems of order and of proper coördination and subordination. To take a rather typical case.—A certain student, like thousands of others, is much interested in music. He has some special qualifications to write about it because he earns his way through college by playing in a dance orchestra. He already knows a good deal about music, and he reads a long list of magazine articles on the subject. Thinking over the general subject of

music, influenced to an extent by a recent concert by Paul Whiteman's orchestra, he decides to limit his paper to the special field of jazz. He runs through his material and jots down the following topics:

The beginning of Jazz
The instruments of a Jazz orchestra
The peculiar quality of Jazz
Syncopated time
The saxophone
Paul Whiteman and the spread of Jazz
The musical notation of Jazz
Jazz and classical music

It is obvious that such an order as this will not do, and it is equally obvious that there is nothing here to show the relative importance and logical relationship of the different ideas. There are heads upon which to write, but nothing more. Reflecting upon his material, he begins to see order emerge therefrom. He perceives, logically enough, that there appear to be two large heads under which he can group his material: one showing how this thing came about; another showing what it is. And after some trial and error, he proceeds to group in each of his larger divisions the heads which seem naturally to belong there. His final result stands thus:

I. History of Jazz
    1. The beginning of Jazz
    2. Paul Whiteman and the spread of Jazz
    3. The saxophone and its relation to Jazz
II. The anatomy of Jazz
    1. The instrumentation of a Jazz orchestra
    2. The musical notation of Jazz
    3. The peculiar quality of Jazz—syncopation vs. classical qualities [1]

[1] When there is only one subhead, we write it this way, rather than make a separate head for it.

While not a perfect outline, this is at least acceptable. Here is a subject limited to something like workable bounds. It is divided, if not exhaustively, at least practically and logically, into main divisions which cover the ground intended, each division in turn being marked off into smaller units which fix the nature and circumscribe the boundaries of the discussion of this particular phase of the subject. When such an organization has presented itself to a writer, his doubts and perplexities begin to disappear. He is ready to begin his composition.

EXERCISES

1. Test the outlines given in this chapter according to rules for logical division. Do the divisions cover the field? Are they mutually exclusive? Are they made upon a single principle? Are they arranged in an easily intelligible order?

2. Examine an essay which you have recently read. Find its main divisions. Upon what basis are they made? Is it a logical division? Bring to class the outline you have made.

3. Find an example of literary partition. Why was not a logical division made?

4. Criticize the following outline from the point of view of form and logical division:

Dogs

I. House dogs
   1. Fox-terriers
   2. Poodles

II. Dogs used for hunting
   1. Pointers
   2. Foxhounds

III. Large dogs best
   1. St. Bernards
   2. Wolf-hounds
      a. As a hunter
      b. As a friend

IV. Dogs make good companions
   1. The fox-terrier
   2. The collie is a very chummy dog

Construct what you feel would be a good plan for a five-hundred-word essay on dogs. (Don't forget to limit your subject.)

5. A student paper which the writer has in his hand has for its title "The Value of Motion Pictures to the American Public." The title, it will be seen, indicates a narrowing down of the general subject "motion pictures" to a workable field. There is in the paper an introduction showing briefly the growth and influence of the movie industry. In the body, or development, of the paper, the student, wishing to make clear the *specific values* of motion pictures, has made the following division:

The specific value of motion pictures:
   A. In education
   B. To society
   C. In morals
   D. To art
   E. To science
   F. To industry
   G. Their effect on children

Criticize this division according to the laws of logical division.

6. Below are given the rules framed by a famous philosopher for conducting his own investigations. Compare these with the principle for division discussed in this chapter.

DESCARTES' RULES

> The first was never to accept anything for true which I did not clearly know to be such; that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitancy and prejudice, and to comprise nothing more in my judgment than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly as to exclude all ground of doubt.
>
> The second, to divide each of the difficulties under examination into as many parts as possible, and as might be necessary for its adequate solution.
>
> The third, to conduct my thoughts in such order that, by commencing with objects the simplest and easiest to know,

I might ascend by little and little, and, as it were, step by step, to a knowledge of the more complex, assigning in thought a certain order even to those objects which in their own nature do not follow a natural sequence relatively to one another.

And the last, in every case to make enumerations so complete, and reviews so general, that I should be certain of having omitted nothing.

7. Study the outlines given below from the point of view:

1. Of limitations of subject
2. Of logical division
3. Of order of development
4. Of form

The first is a plan of John Ruskin's account of his early education. It may furnish a suggestion to some student who is planning to write on an autobiographical subject.

The second shows the heads under which G. Lowes Dickinson discussed the subject of Greek tragedy in his interesting book, *The Greek View of Life*. The comparative method exemplified by Mr. Dickinson in this essay—indicated in subhead 2 under I in the outline—is a very useful one in certain cases. Try it out some time.

The third is an outline used by a student in a sketch of the life of Aaron Burr. It appears at a glance to cover too much ground. The paper based on this outline had to be hurried and cursory. There was little space for detail. It is a plan for a book, not a student essay. Yet such a plan is sometimes justifiable—in a paper which frankly sets out to give a running survey of the life of a man, or a general sketch of a large subject. Occasional papers of this kind are of value.

EARLY EDUCATION AT HERNE HILL

I. Introduction

1. Herne Hill—location of the house
2. The house—environment—view
3. The garden

II. General education
    1. Largely under influence of mother
        a. Tasks—lessons in the garden
        b. Leisure—solitude in the garden
            (1) In part due to mother's non-interference
            (2) In part due to father's attitude of isolation toward neighbors and relatives
        c. Results
            (1) Attention centered upon self, in an independent, a sort of cock-robin, existence
            (2) Imaginative powers centered on inanimate objects or upon regions of romance
    2. Largely under influence of father
        a. Watching him shave
        b. Listening to story of the picture
        c. Enjoying afternoons and evenings with father and mother
        d. Reading of *Waverley*

III. Specific education—mother's teaching of Bible
    1. Reading and interpreting Bible—from beginning to end
    2. Memorizing—long passages, chapter by chapter
        a. Particular passages—119th Psalm
        b. Complete list of chapters

IV. Results
    1. Blessings
        a. Learned meaning of peace
        b. Received understanding of Obedience and Faith
        c. Developed habits of fixed attentions
    2. Calamities
        a. I had nothing to love
        b. I had nothing to endure
        c. I was taught no social discipline
            (1) No precision nor etiquette of manners developed
            (2) Shyness and rudeness resulted.
        d. I had no opportunity to develop ideas of right and wrong

GREEK TRAGEDY

I. Nature of Greek tragedy
  1. Determined by religion
    a. Subject matter
    b. Characters
  2. Distinguished from Shakespearean and French tragedy
    a. Shakespearean tragedy devoid of preconceptions
      (1) Any subject
      (2) Any treatment
    b. Shakespearean tragedy representation of life, Greek tragedy interpretation of national tradition
    c. French tragedy inspired by court

II. Consequences involved in this conception
  1. Limitation of theme
    a. Behind all sin and suffering must lie redeeming magnanimity
    b. The whole æsthetic effect limited by ethical presuppositions
      (1) Euripides criticized for introducing women in love
      (2) Æschylus boasts of his freedom from this taint
  2. Limitation in treatment
    a. Necessity of illustrating some moral law determines treatment
    b. Action more important than character—it is human nature in the broad that is represented
    c. The form of tragedy—adapted to realization of its end
      (1) Dialogue between two persons permitted discussion of ethical problems
      (2) Choral odes permitted comment, advice, prophecy

AARON BURR—A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

I. Introductory remarks—Modern tendencies in history and biography: the passion for "truth" which has caused the pub-

lication of much that is derogatory to our heroes of the past, much that is estimable in the lives of our national villains

II. Burr's life previous to the Revolution
    1. Birth
    2. Elementary education
    3. Higher education

III. Life in the army
    1. In the State Guards
    2. In the Revolutionary Army
        a. As a member of Arnold's expeditionary force to Canada
        b. As aide to Washington
        c. As regimental commander at Valley Forge
        d. As commander of the "lines" of Westchester county

IV. Life after Revolution
    1. Law practice
    2. Politics
        a. Leader in New York politics
        b. Vice-president
    3. Duel with Hamilton
        a. Causes
        b. Effects
    4. The conspiracy
        a. New Orleans
        b. Mexico
    5. Trial for treason
    6. Flight to Europe
        a. In England
        b. In France
            (1) Financial difficulties
            (2) Signs of insanity
    7. Return to America
        a. A fugutive
        b. A lawyer again
        c. Death

Chapter IX

THE LONGER COMPOSITION (*Continued*)—WRITING THE THEME

Since last February I have written two volumes of the "Renaissance in Italy," all but three chapters. They are the two final volumes on Italian Literature. Of course this is only the first rough composition; for, like Mill, I always now write twice when I am concerned with work requiring a wide sweep and sustained energy. The great thing is to get the masses properly blocked out in the first edition.—JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS, *Letters and Papers.*

I

WHEN should a writer sit down to write? The question recalls an often quoted French novelist. "How is your new book coming along?" he was asked. "Oh, it is about finished," was the reply, "I am almost ready to begin writing." Here in epitome is suggested the ideal stage at which to begin actual composition. The materials have been assembled; the writer has thought his subject through, has made his plan, and knows what he wants to say and how he wants to say it. He has not at this stage actually worded his thought perhaps, though that is sometimes possible—Wordsworth, for example, often composed complete poems in his head as he walked, and set them down on paper afterward—but he has concentrated upon his subject, has reflected upon it, until it has all become clear in his own mind. This is to go a step in advance of the processes of analysis and outlining discussed in the last chapter.[1]

Untrained writers are likely to underestimate the value

[1] Reread at this point the section on Thinking in Chapter IV.

of carrying preparation to this point of perfection. It is not so, however, with the more experienced. As this chapter is being composed, there lies on the desk of the writer a letter from a man who is in the midst of preparing an important scientific book for publication. He is rejoicing in the freedom from certain duties which gives him "time to go off and cogitate. I have been able to think my stuff into an organization much better this summer than at any time before," he says.

The trained writer not only understands the value of such preliminaries to actual composition, but he studies himself and the way his mind works. He knows that it is sometimes necessary to help the mind in these difficult processes of getting ideas cleared up and of selecting and organizing the materials he wants to use; and he knows, too, that the best means of doing this vary greatly with different individuals. Some people need quiet and isolation; others think best in connection with some form of physical exercise. Thoreau was one whose mind worked best when he was doing something, and Rousseau was another. Rousseau has this to say of his own practice:

> Walking has something in it that animates and brightens my ideas; I am scarcely able to think when I keep one position; my body must be in full swing before my mind can be so. The sight of the country, the succession of agreeable objects, the open air, the good health I gain by walking, the freedom of the inn, the removal from everything that makes me feel my dependence, from everything that reminds me of my situation, gives me a greater audacity of thought, casts me, in some way, into the immensity of beings from which I may combine, choose, and appropriate at will, without hindrance and without fear. I dispose, as a master, of all nature. . . .

This ability to "combine, choose, and appropriate" from the world's stores of material and then to dispose of this material as a master is exactly what every intelligent

writer most desires. For Rousseau, walking tuned the mind to just the right pitch to make these happy results possible.

But while Rousseau would walk others clarify their ideas by talking. Here one does not talk to gain new ideas from others, though, as has been pointed out, this is highly useful to the writer, but to catch and give form to hazily defined conceptions lurking like shadows in the periphery of the consciousness, and to solidify these, along with better realized ideas, into well-shaped units of thought ready for final expression. Stevenson was one who found it useful to *talk* his ideas into coherent form. In his account of the genesis of the *Master of Ballantrae* he most interestingly reveals his method. Having given us the origin of his idea, he goes on into details of its development:

> I need not tell my brothers of the craft that I was now in the most interesting moment of an author's life; the hours that followed that night upon the balcony, and the following nights and days, whether walking abroad or lying wakeful in my bed, were hours of unadulterated joy. . . .
>
> My mother, who was then living with me alone, perhaps had less enjoyment; for, in the absence of my wife, who is my usual helper in these times of parturition, I must spur her up at all seasons to hear me relate and try to clarify my informed fancies.
>
> —*Essays in the Art of Writing.*

The method Stevenson here describes can hardly be overrated. Every student who has trouble forming his ideas for writing should try it. It is astonishing how notions clear, how new conceptions rush to the mind, how fresh relationships reveal themselves, in this process of talking a subject through. It is at once a stimulation to the imagination and a check upon the clarity and thoroughness of one's thinking. There is probably no more

effective way to give impetus to that alert mental activity which must immediately precede and often accompany the process of successful writing.

Yet another aid to the clarification and arrangement of ideas preparatory to final expression is that which comes through writing itself. Frequently the very act of setting one's ideas down on paper will help clear up a vague, hazy notion and make it suddenly luminous. The very struggle to express leads to the power to see the thing clearly. In a letter concerning certain lines in his *Endymion* Keats told his publishers that the writing of this argument had been to him the "very stepping of the imagination toward truth." But Keats had painstakingly rewritten this passage before he could make it express exactly what he wanted to say; indeed, he revised it even after the book had gone to press, a fact which shows even more conclusively how the writing and rewriting finally led to clarity. That very thing has happened to hundreds of writers. In fact, it is the practice of most people who write to make tentative drafts—often two or three—of what they want to say before putting it into permanent form.

It is a curious paradox: a man cannot express himself well without thinking well; yet, frequently, he cannot think well without expressing himself well, and as often as not it is in the act of expression that he first begins to realize his thought with any distinctness. Thus, thinking so begets good expression, and expression so begets good thinking, that the two activities appear almost indivisible, and it may be truly said that it is impossible to tell where one leaves off and the other begins. Certain it is, as almost any writer could tell if he would, that it is frequently in the third or fourth or fifth draft that the plot, or character, or idea finally assumes something of the perfection of form for which the mind has been intently, though

vaguely seeking, and then suddenly we have the thought and the expression at one and the same time: we did not really know all that we thought until we had expressed it.

II

Beginning, Middle, and End

In his book on Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford tells of his own and Conrad's attitude toward beginnings. Every one who writes well knows the necessity of good openings, but Mr. Ford thinks that he and Conrad "more than other writers realized of what primary importance they were." He states their creed thus:

> A real short story must open with a breathless sentence; a long-short story may begin with an "as" or a "since" and some leisurely phrases. At any rate, the opening paragraph of a book or story should be of the tempo of the whole performance.

This is excellently stated; but it needs to be added that a suitable beginning should be not only of the same tempo of the whole performance, thus suggesting the movement to be followed throughout, but in the same *tone* and *mood,* establishing something of the feeling and atmosphere which are to envelop the piece. The introductory sentences should tell much of what to look for in the coming pages; they should arouse a certain expectancy to be satisfied before the end. They should, moreover, strike the keynote of thought, and so afford the most rapid and certain descent upon the central theme or action; they should also—and this need hardly be said—catch the reader's attention and excite his interest. An interesting example of an opening that sets the *tone* and *mood* of the whole is the following from Barrett Wendell's notable book on English composition:

During the past ten years I have been chiefly occupied in teaching, to undergraduates of Harvard College, the principles of English Composition. In the course of that time I have been asked a great many questions concerning the art, mostly by friends writing for publication. Widely different as these inquiries have naturally been, they have possessed in common one trait sufficiently marked to place them, in my memory, in a single group: almost without exception they have concerned themselves with matters of detail. . . .

—*English Composition.*

The grateful reader is here led at once to anticipate a leisurely, intimate, and delightful, though dignified, talk on a subject usually treated with deadly formality. Moreover, he at once feels the vivid personality of the writer and senses the calm, easy mastery with which he has approached his task. The tone and the tempo have been set; interest has been created; the key to the subject matter given.

An opening that strikes directly into the subject, at the same time containing an element that piques the curiosity and invites further reading, is the first sentence of A. Clutton-Brock's *An Unpopular Master.* "Nicholas Poussin," he says, "is one of the greatest painters of the world; yet it is easier to give reasons for disliking him than for liking him."

Another beginning that at once fixes the attention, arouses interest in subject matter, and indicates the tone of the piece (in this case controversial), at the same time getting well into the subject, is the following from a recent magazine article:

How would you like to have your child attend school in a group known to all as the "dumb-bell class" or the "mutt class"? What would be the permanent effect upon a child so stigmatized before his fellow-pupils and teachers?

These questions arise in one's mind when certain conditions grow-

ing out of classification of pupils according to I. Q. ratings are pondered. . . .[1]

A concrete illustration with a direct application often furnishes the elements necessary to a successful beginning. Such is Gilbert Murray's arresting opening to *The Soul As It Is:*

In Tolstoy's novel *The Cossacks,* there is a scene where a man swimming is shot dead and drifts to the shore, while his slayer swims over the flooded river to get him and crouches down exhausted at his side. There the two lie, looking almost the same. But one is full of a turmoil of desires and aspirations, mingled feelings of pride and misery; and the other is dead. And the only sign of difference is a light steam rising from the body of the living man. So small a sign, and yet all the difference that can be!

Formal and Informal Openings.—Openings may be divided into two large classes, the Informal and the Formal. All the examples so far given have been informal,—that is, the writer begins in an unstudied, almost conversational way, at some point which admits of logical and interesting entry into the theme. The formal opening is, however, more suitable for certain classes of subjects. In scientific and argumentative treatises, for instance, it is frequently necessary to define the subject and limit the scope of the discussion. And in longer expository essays, where there are naturally several divisions of thought, it is usually a help to the reader if these divisions are indicated at the beginning, or at least some place near the opening paragraph.

The following is an example of the formal opening. Here there is both limitation of subject and a definition of terms.

To begin with, we must be quite clear what it is that we have to discuss, and I propose that we should limit our consideration to

[1] ARMAND R. MILLER, "Don't Call Them Dumb-bells," *McNaught's,* June, 1926.

the grammar of present-day English. This grammar we might define as "an account of the customs which the so-called 'educated' classes of England follow at the present time in the use of words for the expression of their thought." We will not concern ourselves with the origin or history of these customs, which is the province of "historical" grammar. It is a most worthy study, and can be made an interesting one to those who like it, but it should be kept in its place and not allowed to intrude upon that grammar which is concerned with the language as now spoken. Where it is so allowed, it often tends to confusion of thought, and we find grammarians writing of present-day English as if it were a kind of degenerate or corrupted form of something earlier and better, whereas it is nothing of the kind. Rather is it an instrument of the expression of thought so refined to our modern needs by the experiment and practice of generations as to be unsurpassed by our own language at any earlier period, and perhaps by any other language in the world today.

—McKERROW, *Essays and Studies.*

Bertrand Russell closes his introduction to *Education and the Good Life* with a paragraph which really serves as an opening to his book; it is an excellent example of a clear and interesting, though formal, outline and division of the subject as it is to be treated:

I propose, in what follows, to consider first the aims of education: the kind of individuals, and the kind of community, that we may reasonably hope to see produced by education applied to raw material of the present quality. I ignore the question of the improvement of the breed, whether by eugenics or by any other process, natural or artificial, since this is essentially outside the problems of education. But I attach great weight to modern psychological discoveries which tend to show that character is determined by early education to a much greater extent than was thought by the most enthusiastic educationists of former generations. I distinguish between education of character and education in knowledge, which may be called instruction in the strict sense. The distinction is useful, though not ultimate: some virtues are required in a pupil who is to become instructed, and much knowledge is required

for the successful practice of many important virtues. For purposes of discussion, however, instruction can be kept apart from education of character. I shall deal first with education of character, because it is especially important in early years; but I shall carry it through to adolescence, and deal, under this head, with the important question of sex education. Finally, I shall discuss intellectual education, its aims, its curriculum, and its possibilities from the first lesson in reading and writing to the end of the university years. The further education which men and women derive from life and the world I shall regard as lying outside my scope; but to make men and women capable of learning from experience should be one of the aims which early education should keep most prominently in view.

Introducing an Old Subject.—Perhaps the most difficult kind of beginning to write successfully is that which introduces a subject already considered threadbare. It is not easy to enlist the reader's interest in an old matter. Skillful writers overcome this difficulty by showing, usually in a most engaging, tactful way, that, in spite of all that has been written, there is perhaps something new to be said or that some of the old things are worth saying over in a new way. A well-known instance of this kind of opening is Lowell's introduction to his essay on Chaucer.

Will it *do* to say anything more about Chaucer? Can any one hope to say anything, not new, but even fresh, on a topic so well worn? It may well be doubted; and yet one is always the better for a walk in the morning air,—a medicine which may be taken over and over again without any sense of sameness, or any failure of its invigorating quality.

—*Literary Essays.*

In an age when our libraries are becoming filled with more and more books on many old subjects, the task of ingratiating oneself with an already surfeited audience becomes increasingly delicate. A recent magazine article on Shakespeare begins:

So much has been written about Shakespeare that one would suppose—and may even be forgiven for hoping—the subject to be near exhaustion. Can yet another new approach to him be found?

This is strategic. If a pathway not yet fully explored can be discovered, there is excuse for reopening the subject. The writer of the article finds one:

My first suggestion is that, with as many attributes to his credit as had Olympian Zeus, the path least trodden by critic and panegyrist is that which is most obvious, as it is the oldest approach of all, the approach to Shakespeare the playwright.[1]

The Ending.—Of no less importance than a good opening is a good ending. It is here that the writer rounds out and gives the effect of finish to the unit of thought he is expressing. Here he shows whether he has had capacity to concentrate on his subject until his imagination, working through to a conclusion, has built the completed structure of idea he has set out to put on paper. And it is here, where absolute consistency of purpose, or the lack of it, will stand revealed, where the firmest grasp of his materials and the most steady mental control are required, that many writers show failure. What a host of playwrights have sunk into oblivion because they lacked the ability to write a good last act; how many otherwise good stories have fallen down in a sad, limping, indeterminate conclusion; and what hosts of arguments and explanations have proved futile because of the speaker's or writer's impotence in pointing his thought to a definite end! It is a commonplace among critics and writers that the last lines in poetry are the most rigid test of skill. Even Shakespeare sometimes failed here, in his sonnets especially.

The good ending is logical, growing naturally out of what has preceded it. This is even true of such surprise

[1] GRANVILLE-BARKER, "Shakespeare and Modern Stagecraft," *Yale Review,* July, 1926, p. 703.

or "trick" endings as O. Henry's, which are, after all, when the story is well written, subtly prepared for in advance. The ending may be a summary, it may be a climax, it may be simply a stop at a favorable point; but it must not strike the reader as out of harmony, either in general tone or thought, with what has gone before. The good ending should give a satisfying sense of clearness and completeness, should give the impression of a full stop. And this whether it is reached in the triumphant pyramidal conclusion of the orator and debater, in the restrained rounding-out of one of Lamb's or Addison's essays, or in the peaceful final resolution of one of Shakespeare's tragedies—calm after storm.

Much might be said more specifically about types of endings; but beyond suggesting that in longer expository or argumentative works the interests of clarity, convenience, and force seem to be best served by a formal categorical summary, the rest is left to the common sense and good taste of the writer. It only need be remembered that whatever the means used, the two general principles for a good ending remain the same: it must be logical; it must give a sense of finality and completeness.

There is no better way to discuss the ending than to examine some successful examples.

John Burroughs concludes his delightful essay on the honeybee in *Pepacton* with the paragraph, "Wild honey is as near like tame as wild bees are like their brothers in the hive. The only difference is that wild honey is flavored with your adventure, which makes it a little more delectable than the domestic article."

This ending is appropriate and satisfying. It produces a sense of finality, the result of a combination of dying cadence and a rounded close in sense.

William Beebe closes his notable description of a night in the jungle with something of an informal summary, in sentences lightly suggestive of the larger outlines of

the sketch. It is chiefly admirable for the grace and harmony with which it brings a piece of writing of rare delicacy and charm, in which there has been created an atmosphere of quiet and mystery, to an appropriate period —like the ebbing away of a soft night breeze in forest boughs.

> And sometime in the future, when the lure of the full moon comes, and I answer, I shall be certain of finding the same silence, the same wonderful light, and the waiting trees and the magic. But Nupee may not be there. He will perhaps have slipped into memory, with Dorjak and Alladin. And if I find no one as silently friendly as Nupee, I shall have to watch alone through my jungle night.
>
> —*Jungle Peace.*

Another good ending with a similar informal touch, which in casual epitome likewise casts a glance back over the matter that has gone before, is the following:

> Well, this it was that stirred me, not to imitate Dickens as a novelist, but to follow afar off his example as a worker. From this point of view the debt I owe to him is incalculable. Among the best of my memories are those moments under a lowering sky when I sought light in the pages of his biographer, and rarely sought in vain.[1]

A good ending often links itself to the opening. In *The Woodlanders,* Thomas Hardy achieves an almost ideal effect of artistry by tying his ending to his beginning through Marty South. The novel opens with a scene connected with Marty—a simple, isolated woodland girl—and her love for Giles Winterbourne. The spirit of Marty's dumb devotion and of sad solitude pervades the first chapters. Marty is not the central figure in the tale, but she runs through it like a somber binding thread in a lighter tapestry, and at the end, she closes the story as

[1] GEORGE GISSING, "Dickens in Memory," from *Critical Studies of the Works of Charles Dickens.*

she began it, in the minor key of lonely devotion, kneeling over the grave of Winterbourne, whispering words of love to the man who had never loved her in return, and had given his life for another woman.—"But no, no, my love, I never can forget 'ee; for you was a *good* man, and did good things!"

In longer works the ending is prepared for in advance: certain little subtle signals announce to the practiced reader the approaching close. Even in shorter pieces there is usually some unobtrusive indication before the end is reached. It may be a slight change of tone, a premonitory word or phrase, or a shift in emphasis that gives the clue; it is often the all but imperceptible beginning of the delicate curve that with graceful but decisive movement is to round off the thought or theme.

In his lecture on Pre-Raphaelitism, Ruskin prepares us for his ending several paragraphs in advance. Here are the beginnings of the last four paragraphs:

"Lastly"

"With all their faults, their pictures are, since Turner's death, the best," etc.

"This I believe to be a most candid statement of all their faults and all their deficiencies."

"And now let me remind you of one thing more."

Will Durant, approaching the end of his chapter on Voltaire in the *Story of Philosophy,* prepares the reader many paragraphs in advance by skillful touches that suggest the near conclusion of his account. One paragraph begins:

"He was now eighty-three; and a longing came over him to see Paris before he died."

And the next,

"He was so ill now that a priest came to shrive him."

After this, as an introduction to the final scenes of his public life, Mr. Durant writes,

"Though sick and tottering, he was driven to the

Academy, through tumultuous crowds that clambered on his carriage and tore into souvenirs the precious pelisse which Catherine of Russia had given him."

Then the essay comes to a full stop with two brief paragraphs that convey an almost perfect sense of finality:

When the old patriarch of letters went home that evening he was almost reconciled to death. He knew that he was exhausted now; that he had used to the full that wild and marvelous energy which nature had given to him perhaps more than to any man before him. He struggled as he felt life being torn from him; but death could defeat even Voltaire. The end came on May 30, 1778.

He was refused Christian burial in Paris; but his friends sat him up grimly in a carriage, and got him out of the city by pretending that he was alive. At Scellières they found a priest who understood that rules were not made for geniuses; and the body was buried in holy ground. In 1791 the National Assembly of the triumphant Revolution forced Louis XVI to recall Voltaire's remains to the Panthéon. The dead ashes of the great flame that had been were escorted through Paris by a procession of 100,000 men and women, while 600,000 flanked the streets. On the funeral car were the words: "He gave the human mind a great impetus; he prepared us for freedom." On his tombstone only three words were necessary:

HERE LIES VOLTAIRE.

The two following paragraphs represent the formal summarizing type of ending. Such conclusions are especially useful at the close of long or abstruse discussion; they permit the writer to tie up the separate threads of his discourse; they place the substance of what has been said before the reader with such clearness that he cannot misunderstand. For the young writer of argument or exposition the summary is peculiarly valuable, in that it forces him to come down to tin tacks; he must ask himself just what he has said, or whether he has said anything.

This is often the beginning of the intelligent self-criticism essential to competent writing.

To sum up—the language of literature is experience, the language of race-literature is race-experience, or history, the human use that the race has made of the world. The law appears to be that history in this sense is slowly transformed by a refining and spiritualizing process into an imaginative world, such as the world of mythology, chivalry, or the Scriptures, and that this world in turn becomes emblematic and fades away into an expression of abstract truth. The crude beginning of the process is seen in our historical fiction; the height of it in Arthur or in Odin; the end of it in the symbolic or allegoric interpretation of even so human a book as Virgil's *Æneid*. Human desire for the best enters into this process with such force that the record of the past slowly changes into the prophecy of the future, and out of the passing away of what was is built the dream of what shall be; so arises in race-life the creed of what man wishes to believe and the dream of the life he desires to live; this human desire for belief and for life is, in the final analysis, the principle of selection whose operation has been sketched, and on its validity rests the validity and truth of all literature.[1]

We may now briefly enumerate the elements of style. We have, peculiar to the prose writer, the task of keeping his phrases large, rhythmical, and pleasing to the ear, without ever allowing them to fall into the strictly metrical: peculiar to the versifier, the task of combining and contrasting his double, treble, and quadruple pattern, feet and groups, logic and metre—harmonious in diversity: common to both, the task of artfully combining the prime elements of language into phrases that shall be musical in the mouth; the task of weaving their argument into a texture of committed phrases and of rounded periods—but this particularly binding in the case of prose: and again common to both, the task of choosing apt, explicit, and communicative words. We begin to see now what an intricate affair is any perfect passage; how many faculties, whether of taste or pure reason, must be held upon the stretch to make it; and why, when it is made, it should afford us so complete a pleas-

[1] GEORGE WOODBERRY, "The Language of All the World," from *The Torch*, Harcourt, Brace and Co.

ure. From the arrangement of according letters, which is altogether arabesque and sensual, up to the architecture of the elegant and pregnant sentence, which is a vigorous act of the pure intellect, there is scarce a faculty in man but has been exercised. We need not wonder, then, if perfect sentences are rare, and perfect pages rarer.

—STEVENSON, *On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature.*

The Middle.—With a good opening and a logical ending—seen in preview from the start—the middle is likely to be easier. But it will not, as some writers suggest, take care of itself. A successful middle requires the utmost pains and the clearest thinking. The problem here is to build into one orderly coherent structure the units of thought represented in paragraphs and larger divisions made up of groups of paragraphs. The process now is one of integration—the bringing of parts together into a whole. One may suppose that the plan, objectified into an outline, has been made before the writing begins. Sometimes this plan can be followed without change, but more frequently, as the composition grows under one's hand, it becomes expedient to make shifts in arrangement and to add or substitute materials. The end is, of course, to say what one has to say in the best manner possible. This means a method of development of idea that can be most easily grasped by the reader. Whatever one writes should always be considered as talk to some one. And talk that interests and pleases and is understood must follow the natural course through which an idea or a line of thought unfolds itself. There is no more disagreeable kind of person to talk to on earth than one with a "jumpy" mind, one that hurdles irresponsibly from irrelevance to irrelevance with no care for even apparent connections. Hence, in writing a longer composition, once launched into the subject, there is no more important single principle to be observed than to follow a chain of thought through in its natural, often inevitable, line of development.

Probably the next most helpful thing for a beginner to keep in mind is that wherever the thought falls into logical divisions, attention must be centered upon each of these divisions, one block at a time, until it is rounded into a tight little theme in itself—whether it is one paragraph or a section made up of a dozen paragraphs—this to be blended through skillful transitions into what has gone before and what is to come after it. After all, one can write only one thing at a time; if each part is good, then the whole must be good.

In narrative writing, to follow the natural course of thought means, as a rule, to advance from one event to the next according to the order in which these events occurred. The skillful writer of narrative soon learns, too, that stories fall into segments; there are, for instance, narrative incidents and descriptive scenes like Mrs. Combermere's tea party in Walpole's *Cathedral* and the gambling episode in Hardy's *Return of the Native*, or like the cock fight or the horse-race in James Boyd's *Drums*, the courtroom scene in *The Brothers Karamazov*, or the destruction of the house in *A Lear of the Steppes*, the snowstorm in *Giants in the Earth*, or the flood in *The Mill on the Floss*, each of which makes up a unity in itself and requires undivided attention while being written. Though built up separately, these scenes are not composed independently of each other, and then fitted together like mosaics in a floor. Rather, they follow each other in sequence with stretches of progressive narrative between, and are, moreover, often planned with reference to climactic order, the most vivid, intense, and significant scene being "worked up to" through lesser scenes.

In ordinary description, the order of development will usually proceed according to the relation of objects to each other in space,—from the near to the far, or the reverse—or according to the relative prominence and importance of details—usually from the large and general

or prominent to the small or less prominent. More is said on this subject in the chapter on Description.

There is not space here to go far into the many possibilities for arrangement. The safest rule to follow, as has been suggested in a preceding chapter, is to proceed according to the psychological laws of association.

Ideas sometimes seem to follow each other as inevitably as the successive letters of the alphabet or the numbers in the series 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. If one were to explain such a process as the canning of salmon, for instance, it would be natural to begin with the catching of the fish, and to follow through the various successive stages until the sealed and labeled can comes through ready for the market.

In such cases the test of logical sequence seems to be the order in which ideas come to the mind. A good mind will normally work this way—straight ahead along a pathway of orderly thought. In various types of expository writing, especially those involving explanations of how a thing is made or done, and in debate, where one argument calls up or merges into the next, the order in which ideas naturally present themselves would seem to be the only possible logical one to follow.

Thus, if we start with an effect it is the most natural thing in the world to proceed to its cause; likewise, our minds instinctively run from a cause to its effects. In similar fashion, we associate ideas that are similar or in sharp contrast; if we ask a question, we answer it; if we advance one argument we give our reasons and present our evidence before plunging into another.

Schemes of arrangement less obvious are those involving the building of ideas up to a climax, frequently done in argument, or presenting them in the order of their importance, the most significant last, of course. It often requires a good deal of study and experimentation to discover what should come first, what later, where ideas

of unequal weight or appeal are to be built into a pyramidal structure with the important or climactic at the top. Success requires a fine sense of architectural fitness, and a discriminative feeling for relative values. But here again the ultimate tests are the same: what is natural and logical? what is effectively forceful as opposed to what is unsymmetrical and ineffectual?

Transitions.—A good writer is always mindful of his reader, and there is no better way to show consideration for him than through transitions. Transition (meaning *carrying across*) is the device by which a writer indicates junctions of thought. Through it he carries his reader with him when he changes stations in thought. It is the connecting bus that saves the traveler loss of time and energy, perhaps complete loss of his way.

Transition may occur between sentences, paragraphs, groups of paragraphs, between chapters, even between books.

Excellent examples of transition may be found in any good piece of writing, for just as the greater and better managed the railroad terminal, the more perfect the service it renders travelers in contrast with the haphazard jerkwater station, so the more skillful the writer, the more solicitude he shows for the mental comfort of those who journey his way. It is well worth our time to glance for a moment at specific cases. In G. Lowes Dickinson's discussion of Greek tragedy, a chapter of his admirably written *The Greek View of Life,* we find such transitional paragraphs as these:

> Such then was the general character of the Greek tragedy—an interpretation of the national ideal. Let us now proceed to follow out some of the consequences involved in this conception.

Then having devoted several paragraphs to a consideration of these consequences, he writes:

Meantime, to assist the reader to realize with somewhat greater precision the bearing of the foregoing remarks, it may be worth while to give an outline sketch of one of the most celebrated of the Greek tragedies, the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus.

In another discussion of Greek drama one finds this excellent example of transitional paragraph. It is of that type which, looking backward and forward at the same time, clearly and firmly interlocks separate divisions of the main theme:

So far we have been occupied with those characteristics of the ancient drama which were immediately determined by the external circumstances of the Attic stage. I have tried to show that some of the most marked qualities of the work of art were necessitated by the conditions of its form. But other and not less important points of difference between the ancient and the modern drama were due to the subject-matter of the former.

—SYMONDS, *Greek Poets.*

This is admirably clean-cut writing. No reader can lose his way where such pains are taken for his guidance.

An exemplification of careful transition is to be found in H. S. Canby's essay on *The Sins of Reviewing*. Here Mr. Canby undertakes to classify reviewers, as he says, "by temperament rather than by the theories they possess." Mr. Canby is never vague in his meanings, and a glance at his methods of carrying the reader along with him in this article will go far to explain the secret of his enviable lucidity. There is first a paragraph stating explicitly what the writer proposes to do:

But in order to clear the ground let me make first a larger distinction, into mythical reviewers, bad but useful reviewers, and good reviewers. Like the nineteenth-century preacher I will dispose of the false, dwell upon the wicked, and end briefly with that heaven of literary criticism where all the authors are happy and all the reviewers excellent.

The beginnings of the three following sections point back to this paragraph of classification and also tie the new material to that which has just preceded. Referring to the mythical reviewer, he says:

> The reviewer I know best never, I profoundly believe, has existed, and I fear never will exist.
>
> Coldly, palpably real is the next critic of my acquaintance, the academic reviewer.
>
> My acquaintance with the next bad, but occasionally useful, reviewer is less extensive, but by the circumstance of the case, more intimate. I shall call him the ego-frisky reviewer.

Mr. Canby then discusses the dull reviewer:

> The dull reviewer has two varieties: the stupid and the merely dull.
>
> There are not many really stupid reviewers. . . . But merely dull reviewers are as plentiful as fountain pens.
>
> The dullest reviewers I have ever known, however, have been the long-winded ones.
>
> The long-winded are the dullest of dull reviewers, but the most pernicious are the wielders of *clichés* and platitudes.

At the end of this division there occurs another transitional paragraph indicating the end of this division and preparing for the next one, but it is unnecessary to quote further; enough has been given to show with what scrupulous care the skilled writer signals to his readers the exact pathway of thought he is following.

The instinct for transition is part and parcel of the instinct for a cleanly constructed whole, the parts of which not only articulate but are shown to be articulated. Good transition in and by itself is of small consequence. No transitional device, for instance, could successfully bridge the gap between two ideas that did not belong together. Skillful transition can never serve as a substitute for coherent thinking. Good transition shows coherence, does not make it. And as the binding element which helps to

blend the variously related parts of a composition into a harmonious organic unity, it is of supreme importance. As such, it not only furnishes the natural cement between divisions which obviously should stand together, but it enables the writer to show gracefully and clearly the more involved relationships which the reader might otherwise fail to see. Thus, transition, like every other legitimate element in composition, is merely a means to aid in the expression of what the writer most wants to say in the way he wants to say it.

EXERCISES

1. Study the longer selections contained in the exercises of the last two chapters for transitions. Make a list of the kinds of transitions to be found linking paragraph to paragraph in the story of the funeral of Florence Mills in Chapter III.

2. Repeat this exercise with the selection from Galsworthy in Chapter V.

3. Study a recent article from one of the better magazines for transitions. Show how the writer links his sentences in the first two paragraphs. Make a list of the words, phrases, or sentences used for transition between paragraphs. In how many cases is the transition merely "logical," requiring no verbal indication? Do you find any poor transitions, where failure to show connections in thought results in obscurity?

4. Study the longer selections in Chapters II, IV, and V for methods of development.

5. Study openings: Read half a dozen essays or magazine articles to see how they begin. Which are formal, which informal? Which are the best? Why? Which opening was sufficiently interesting to make you want to read the article through?

6. In a similar way examine the beginnings of half a dozen stories. Analyze in each case the author's method of arousing interest. How does each meet other requirements for a good opening? Bring to class the story which you feel begins most successfully.

7. Study the ending of the essays and stories you have examined

for beginnings. Test each ending by the two principles given in the preceding discussion: Is it logical? Does it give a sense of finality and completeness? Which are formal summary? Which otherwise? Show in each case wherein each ending is successful or unsuccessful.

8. Study the beginnings and ends of the story of the funeral of Florence Mills, in Chapter III, and of Galsworthy's *A Green Hill Far Away*, in Chapter V.

9. Read Hazlitt's essay *Of Persons One Would Wish to Have Seen*. Now write an essay on the subject *Some Persons I Should Like to Know*.

10. If you were to be exiled on an uninhabited island with only one person to live with, what kind of person would you choose? Here is a chance to define your ideal friend.

11. All the books in the world except those of one author are to be destroyed. How would you vote? Why?

12. Write a character portrait of the woman of whom Flaubert wrote:

> She had an income of three hundred and eighty francs a year, bequeathed her by her mistress. The garden provided her with vegetables; as for clothes, she had enough to last her until the end of her days, while she saved lighting by going to bed at dusk. (*A Simple Heart*)

13. Read the following extract from Addison; then write an essay on some such subject as *The Ideal Host, Suggestions to Hosts, Hosts who Please and Hosts who Annoy*.

> Having often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humor, lets me rise and go to bed when I please, dine at his own table or in my chamber as I think fit, sit still and say nothing without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the country come to see him, he only shows me

at a distance. As I have been walking in his fields I have observed them stealing a sight of me over a hedge, and have heard the knight desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

14. Write a theme on some topic suggested by any one of the following extracts:

(a) We were in some little time fixed in our seats, and sat with that dislike which people not too good-natured usually conceive of each other at first sight.

(b) An agreeable companion upon the road is as good as a coach.

(c) A man's first care should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heart; his next, to escape the censures of the world. If the last interferes with the former, it ought to be entirely neglected; but otherwise there cannot be a greater satisfaction to an honest mind than to see those approbations which it gives itself seconded by the applause of the public. A man is more sure of his conduct when the verdict which he passes upon his own behavior is thus warranted and confirmed by the opinion of all that know him.

15. Write a theme in which you show what goes on in the mind of one of the following characters under the situation named. Tell the whole story if you like, but put emphasis upon the subjective analysis:

(a) A girl overhears a conversation showing her that people are criticizing her conduct.

(b) A rebellious boy in a strict teacher's class suddenly discovers that she is "human."

(c) A boy or girl who thinks his teacher "easy" suddenly discovers that the reverse is true.

(d) A college student taught to hate liquor has taken his first drink, has got drunk in fact, and wakes the next morning with a headache.

(e) A thug with a better past has just spared a woman, on her way home to a sick child with her week's pay.

(f) A college student has prepared to cheat in examination, but at the critical moment refuses, and decides to play the game straight.

(g) A football umpire who unconsciously favors a certain team knows that the player who made the winning touchdown for this team stepped out of bounds. What is his reaction after the game?

(h) The player knows this too. Show his train of thought.

16. Write a two-thousand-word paper on some subject in which you are especially interested. The following list of topics may prove suggestive:

The Clipper Ship.
Sea Voyages in the Time of Elizabeth.
Hakluyt, the Far-travelled.
The Submarine.
Passenger Dirigibles.
Sea Planes.
Arctic Exploration.
Some Recent Archeological Explorations.
The Pyramids.
The Maya Civilization.
Orchid Flora of the Tropics.
Cypress Swamps.
Behaviorism.
Reflections on our National Sport.
The World Series—A Post-Mortem.
Professional Football—Do We Want It?
Anæmia—New Prices for Calf Liver.
New and Old Methods of Surgery.
A Scientific Discovery.
Etching.
Arguments for (or against) Immortality.
Law Enforcement in Chicago.
Modern Gunmen.
The Mendelian Law.

Chapter X

GETTING AND USING MATERIAL

I

The Library

THE wise man gets grist for his intellectual mill wherever he can find it. Björnson, the Norwegian poet and dramatist, when admired for the variety and beauty of his thoughts, replied that he was a good listener; Shakespeare is supposed to have been called by an envious rival "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles." Those who have thoughts worth listening to usually have been good listeners themselves, close observers of the varied life about them, and often great readers. Of course the mere accumulation of information would not make one a wise or an educated man. It goes without saying that the learner must weigh and measure this mental food, digest and assimilate what is useful, and reject what seems dross. What he retains he incorporates with his previous fund of more or less systematic knowledge.

The process of educating oneself is the process of getting and assimilating the significant ideas about man and the world. Almost every trivial act has something to contribute toward this process. But it has long been agreed that while experience is a good teacher, it will, if undirected, be both a hard and a wasteful teacher. So we have schools with planned courses of study, which can

give to the earnest student in a few years what it took the united effort of humanity many centuries to achieve.

In our various college courses we are asked to write short papers, essays, long theses, etc., because it is well known that the best way to clarify one's ideas on a subject is to express them, either in writing or speech. Writing, because of its permanency, enables us to beat our ideas into a form more coherent and clearer than we can usually achieve in speech, especially if the train of thought is long and intricate.

To further our education, or to get material for the paper which is a part of the educative process, we draw upon every available source. What we all are after is experience. First-hand experience is the most impressive, of course, but it cannot be controlled, cannot always be had when wanted, and may take too long to acquire. So we draw upon the experiences of others, recounted in books and magazines almost without number. A book is a wonderful mechanism which in a few hours can give us in a vicarious way the dramatic events of threescore and ten years, discoveries which occupied the entire lifetime of a Darwin or a Pasteur, the wisdom which resulted from the total conscious labor of an Aristotle or an Emerson.

Every college or university library is a vast storehouse of the condensed and accumulated experience of the human race. The student, whether he has an eye to his general education, or is looking for material for an essay or term thesis, must as quickly as possible acquaint himself with the library. In every large university there is a General or Main library, and several Departmental libraries. The Main or General library is usually centrally housed in a conspicuous building, and may be regarded as the parent of the Departmental libraries, which are usually housed in study-halls in the buildings devoted to special subjects, such as chemistry, biology, rhetoric, and economics. The student should familiarize himself with the General library

first, and then discover whether or not there are study-halls in other buildings where books in fields of special interest to him are kept.

A library is a collection of books. A good library is a large collection of carefully selected books, systematically and conveniently arranged. This arrangement usually means, first, a division into three parts: (1) the periodicals and newspapers; (2) the general reference works; and (3) the main collection of books, stored in the "stacks."

1. *Periodicals.*—The current numbers of magazines and newspapers are kept in what is usually called the Periodical Room, ranged in shelves or labeled compartments around the walls of that room. Magazines dealing with a particular subject, such as psychology, or philology, or fine art, will be found near each other, and on the shelf-section containing the magazines dealing with this subject will be found a label to assist the library user in locating what he wants to find. Magazines of general interest, such as *Forum* or *The Review of Reviews,* will be found together on a convenient rack, the last issue probably enclosed in a buckram cover. All the magazines and papers in this room can be used in the room without asking permission, but they must not be defaced or taken from the room. Certain magazines not found on the shelves can be obtained by applying to the attendant in charge of the Periodical Room. Issues of the magazines six months or more old will have been bound, and in most libraries are kept in the stacks. Alphabetical indexes to magazine material, *Poole's Index* and the *Readers' Guide,* will be found in a conspicuous place in the Periodical Room, and also in the General Reference Room.

2. *The Reference Room.*—The General Reference Room is, in most libraries, the main reading room, and will have tables at which hundreds of students can be seated at a time. Around the walls in open shelves will be ranged

several thousand standard works which can be used, by anyone who knows his way about, without applying to the librarians at the Reference Room desk. In this room also the books are grouped according to subject matter or kind. Thus we shall find near each other encyclopedias in three or four languages, and in other places atlases, histories, works on religion, philosophy, etc., conveniently arranged. The new student should walk around the room several times to fix in mind the locations of the various subjects. Any of these books can be used in the room without asking permission, but they cannot be removed from the Reference Room.

Some marks of a good reference book are:

1. Is it up to date?

2. Are the articles signed and written by persons of authority?

3. Are there bibliographies accompanying the articles? These bibliographies generally come at the end of an article and suggest other places where one may look for material on the subject which one is studying.

4. Does the book contain a good index, or are the articles in the book itself arranged alphabetically?

5. If arranged alphabetically, does the book have plenty of cross references? For example, if one looks for material on the Edict of Nantes and material about the Edict is given under French History, one should find the reference, "*Edict of Nantes*, see *French History*"; or if one looks up the battle of Bunker Hill one may find material under *Bunker Hill*, and at the end of the article a reference, "see also American Revolution," which suggests that one may find more material on Bunker Hill if one consults the article on the American Revolution.

Following is a list of reference works which every student should know how to use:

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* is an English publication, probably the most authoritative reference work. The eleventh edition was published in 1910-1911 in twenty-nine volumes. Since then there have been three supplementary volumes. Let us take a volume off the shelf and look up "aviation." We should of course consult not only the old volumes, but for the newer developments, look into the supplementary volumes. But first we shall see what is in the older part. We take down Volume III, AUS to BIS, and to our surprise fail to find aviation. But we shall not give up. Let us try "aëronautics," which should be in Volume I, A to AND. Sure enough, there it is with a long article, not signed as many *Britannica* articles are, but concluded with a reference list of books and articles on the subject.

Now let us look for "aviation" in the supplement, New Volume I, AAL to EYE. Here we find "aviation," so we conclude that the English have begun to use this word; but it is not the common word in England yet, because we are referred to "Aëronautics," "Aëroplane," "Airship," "Flying." Turning back, we find articles on "Aërial Law," "Aërial Navigation," "Aërodrome," "Aërodynamics," "Aëro Engines," "Aëroplane," etc.,—a great amount of information with up-to-date illustrations.

Other cyclopedias are the *New International, Nelson's Loose Leaf,* and the *Americana.* There are also foreign ones in German, French, and Scandinavian.

There are cyclopedias and dictionaries which do not take all knowledge for their province, but aim instead to cover a particular field, such as philosophy or education or political economy. Examples are Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* in four volumes, Monroe's *Cyclopedia of Education* in five volumes, and Bailey's *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture* in three volumes.

There are also manuals (one-volume reference works) in all of the natural sciences and their branches, such as geology, physiology, and electricity. The *Year Book* issued by the United States Department of Agriculture contains information of all sorts relating to scientific methods and the finances of farming; the latest discoveries in the eradication of plant pests; production, markets, and prices. The *World Almanac* issued by the *New York World* is an inexpensive annual compendium of all sorts of useful information, as diverse as tariff receipts and batting averages, college endowments and cigarette consumption. The index is not all that could be desired, but the book is extremely useful.

Several dictionaries are devoted to the special task of ascertaining the origin of quotations. Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations* traces passages, phrases, and proverbs to their sources. Day's *Collacon* devotes itself to tracing prose quotations. Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* aims to give the derivation, source, or origin of common phrases, allusions, and "words that have a tale to tell." Certain of these dictionaries devote themselves to the quotations from one language only. Such is the work in several volumes by Field, Dalbiac, Harbottle, and Hume, which has separate volumes devoted to quotations in the Oriental languages, in English, German, French, Italian, the classical and Spanish languages.

Certain compilations have been devoted to the characters of literature. Brewer's *Character Sketches of Romance, Fiction, and the Drama* (four volumes) is the best known of such works. Persons and scenes from literature are briefly described; there are many illustrations. Historical persons are usually not given, except as they have been introduced into historical novels and dramas. The same material is contained in one volume under the title Brewer's *Reader's Handbook*. For reference to romances and writers of the Middle Ages see Spence: *Dic-*

tionary of Medieval Romance and Romance Writers. For classical material, Harper's, or Seyffert's *Dictionary* of *Classical Antiquities* are good. The latter has the better illustrations.

For geographical material there are various handbooks, atlases, and gazetteers. Every reference room will have a special section of wide shelves for storing atlases, because atlases, if their maps are to be complete and readable, must have very large pages. The Rand-McNally series for America and for Europe are standard works. The student should always look at the date of issue, for maps of Europe antedating the Peace of Versailles are, of course, useless now, except for purposes of comparison. Lippincott's *Gazetteer of the World* gives condensed information about most of the communities of the world. When looking up information about places of historical or artistic interest one should also consult the guidebooks which are published especially for travelers. Before the war, the Baedecker series was standard. More recently other sets, such as *The Blue Guides,* have entered the field. Because of the many changes in Europe since the war, the date of issue should be noted. Guidebooks are often illustrated with half-tones; they always contain good maps of countries and cities, charts of the ground-plans of churches, galleries, and historic buildings.

For historical material the student who wants a ready reference can consult in the Reference Room such standard works as the *Cambridge Ancient History,* the *Cambridge Medieval History,* the *Cambridge Modern History,* Grote's *History of Greece,* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* Macaulay's *History of England,* Green's *Short History of the English People,* Channing's *History of the United States.* Each of these works is in several volumes. Lippincott's *Pronouncing Biographical Dictionary* and Haydn's *Dictionary of Dates* are handy one-volume books which the student should early locate

and use. For historical and biographical material, it should be remembered, the encyclopedias already mentioned are a useful and convenient source. For further biographical material there is the enormous British compilation, the *Dictionary of National Biography* in fifty-three volumes, with five supplementary volumes devoted to people more recent. This work contains concise and authoritative accounts of every Englishman of prominence (except contemporaries). Throughout the articles the sources for various statements are given by exact reference to other well-known works. If, for instance, one reads the article on Byron he will find that all the standard biographies, memoirs, etc., of the poet in print when this volume of the *Dictionary* was published, have been cited by title, volume, and page. This great work can also be had in a concise, greatly reduced form. There is a *National Cyclopædia of American Biography* also, though it is not of the quality or scope of the British work.

For contemporary biographical material one goes to the *Who's Who* series. *Who's Who* is the originator of the idea and is a British publication. It is published annually and contains in very terse form the principal facts about living persons of importance, British for the most part, though many from other parts of the world are also included. Date of birth, marriage, chief accomplishments, publications, honors and degrees, societies to which one belongs, are given. *Who's Who in America* does the same for Americans. Students sometimes complain that they cannot find what they are looking for, and, while it is possible the person sought is not included in any book, the careless searchers fail because they look in the wrong book, or in the wrong issue. Look at the title, and note the date of the volume. *Wer Ist's* is the corresponding German work. There are several others. Books of this nature have also been made up for special sections of the

country and for particular professions. Thus we have *Who's Who in New York,* and *Who's Who on the Stage.*

For histories of literature the student can consult in the Reference Room many standard works. Aside from one-volume handbooks, of which the number is legion, there is the four-volume work of Garnett and Gosse, *English Literature.* It is profusely illustrated with pictures of authors and their homes, and with facsimiles of autographs, letters, and rare manuscripts. The standard and most scholarly work, however, is the *Cambridge History of English Literature* in fifteen volumes. In the back of each volume is a valuable bibliography for each person and literary movement dealt with in that volume; each volume is carefully indexed. The fifteenth volume, recently added, contains a general index for the entire work.

For European literature the student may consult, in addition to the general and special encyclopedias already cited, Magnus' *A Dictionary of European Literature.* It is a concise compilation in one volume. An elaborate history of the stage, valuable to all who are interested in the development of the theater, is Manzius' *A History of Theatrical Art.*

Students of poetry and poets should also consult Courthope's *History of English Poetry,* a work in six volumes. The general arrangement is chronological. The student, to find what he wants, should examine the table of contents and the rather detailed analysis of contents, or summary, placed in the front of each volume.

Moulton's *Library of Literary Criticism* is a huge eight-volume work made up of short and striking critical comments which have been made on the great literary men and their works. The excerpts printed are arranged chronologically, those for the author first, followed by comments on each of his important works. Contemporary books—that is, books since 1904—will be found listed and commented upon in the annual issues of the *Book Review*

Digest. The *Book Review Digest* for 1926 issued its twenty-second annual volume, listing nearly three thousand books, each with a descriptive note and excerpts from reviews which have appeared in reputable magazines. There is a complete index by subject and author in the back of the volume. It might surprise some who think of this as a very irreligious age that in the index of the 1926 volume there are sixty-one entries under "Jesus Christ." Running our eye down the list we come to "Murry, J. M., *Jesus, Man of Genius.* (D'26)." The parenthetical matter gives the date of publication, December, 1926. Turning from the index to "Murry" in the book proper we find that *Jesus, Man of Genius,* has 373 pages, sells for $2.50, and was published by Harper's. The next numbers are library card numbers. Then we have a brief digest of the content of the book, followed by excerpts from reviews which appeared in the *Bookman, Outlook,* etc. We see that the *Bookman,* Volume 64, number 20, January, 1927, carried a review of Murry's book, one hundred and twenty words in length. The + indicates that on the whole the review was favorable.

Another annotated list of recent books is issued by the American Library Association. The issues of a year are bound into a volume called the *A. L. A. Catalog.* This list is not arranged alphabetically from front to back, but is divided into classes,—"General Works," "Philosophy," etc., and each class is in turn subdivided. See the Table of Contents for the subject desired. "History" in the *A. L. A. Catalog* for 1926 begins on page 543, and the section is divided according to the cataloging system commonly used in American libraries. The student to find any book had best turn to the index in the back of the volume, where he will find books listed both by author and by title. There is a brief characterization of each book. A less valuable compilation is the *Publishers' Trade List Annual.*

The Monthly Catalogue of the United States Public

Documents contains a complete list of government documents with their prices. The issues for a year are bound into a volume and conveniently indexed. There is here a key to vast stores of information on every conceivable subject—fur-bearing animals, forestry, foreign markets for furniture, the standard of living for Texas farmers.

Of dictionaries proper the General Reference Room contains a large number. Conveniently placed upon the tables will, of course, be copies of Webster's *New International,* and the *New Standard,* containing definitions of more than four hundred thousand words, or about four times as many as a good desk dictionary, such as the Webster *Collegiate,* the Funk and Wagnalls *College Standard,* or the Winston *Simplified.* But the last word in dictionaries of the English language is the *Oxford,* or *New English Dictionary.* It is a tremendous work on which the greatest linguists of modern times have labored. Sir James A. H. Murray is the editor-in-chief. The work has been issued in many huge volumes by the Clarendon Press, Oxford. Publication began in 1884, and Volume X, TI to Z, has only recently been completed. The special feature of the *Oxford Dictionary* is that it gives the complete historical development of every word, citing its first appearance in print, and showing its changes in meaning down to the present time. Illustrative sentences and lines of poetry are quoted, with date and author. The full historical account is especially valuable to the student who finds in his reading of sixteenth- or seventeenth-century literature, uses of words which are very different from the modern usage.

The *Century Dictionary and Cyclopædia* is another valuable reference work. There are, in all, twelve volumes, ten of the dictionary proper; Volume XI is a cyclopædia of names, and Volume XII is an atlas and gazetteer. There is a supplement in the back of Volume XI which should not be overlooked. In the General Reference Room

there are also the dictionaries devoted especially to the etymology of English words, to dialects, and, of course, there are dictionaries of all the foreign languages. The student should examine Roget's and March's thesaurus dictionaries, and Crabb's *English Synonyms*.

Anthologies are of various sorts. Some anthologies attempt in a five-foot shelf, or in a number of volumes, to include the greatest contributions to literature made by men of all times. Others confine themselves to literature of one country, or to that of a certain type, such as oratory or the short story; still others restrict themselves to a certain period, such as the past year. Dr. Eliot's *Harvard Classics* and Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature* are the best known of the larger anthologies. The Eliot collection gives many long masterpieces in various fields of knowledge in complete form. Warner's collection of thirty-one volumes devotes twenty-eight volumes to short pieces and to extracts from long works, alphabetically arranged. Volume XXIX is a biographical dictionary; Volume XXX contains synopses of famous books; Volume XXXI is a guide to systematic reading and a general index to the set.

The anthologies of oratory, short stories, and poetry are too numerous to mention. Contemporary short stories, plays, and poems also have annual volumes devoted to them, such as the anthologies edited by Edward O'Brien and Burns Mantle, and Braithwaite's *Anthology of Magazine Verse*.

Books of synopses are often useful to the student, but since they are much misused, reference librarians frown on students who ask for them. A book of synopses may legitimately be used to *refresh* one's memory of a book which he has read, but should never be used as a substitute for the original book. Lazy students read the synopsis of a novel and let it suffice for the original. Hence Volume XXX of Warner's collection, the Grozier *One*

Hundred Best Novels Condensed, the Dickens and the Thackeray and the Waverly dictionaries are usually kept out of the lazy student's reach. Synopses of poetical drama—Shakespeare, for instance—are less apt to be misused.

Another convenient sort of index, indispensable in tracing poetical quotations, is the concordance. Of course, unless one knows or has a pretty good "hunch" as to the authorship of a passage, he will have to resort to Bartlett or another dictionary of quotations, or work out his difficulty by the trial and error method. But if he knows that a certain quotation or partial quotation is, let us say, from the Bible or from Wordsworth, he can find its context in the original work by using the concordance. Presumably everyone who has gone to Sunday School is familiar with the Biblical concordance printed in the back of the ordinary Bible which anyone can afford to buy. It is merely an alphabetically arranged list of all the significant words in the Bible, with citation of book, chapter, and verse where the words are to be found. The verse or part of a verse which a writer makes use of, he may or may not enclose in quotation marks. The most familiar verses are usually not enclosed. In Ruskin's essay called "Traffic" we do find quotation marks used: "Thou when thou prayest, shall not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the churches." "Hypocrites" seems to be the key word to look up in the concordance; we are referred to "Matthew 6:2, 5, 6, 16." The passage quoted seems to be verse five of chapter six; but Ruskin, we find, was either quoting from memory or was not using the Authorized or King James Bible. In addition to the small concordances found in ordinary Bibles, there are many learned and elaborate Biblical concordances.

There have been concordances made for the works of all the chief poets. Among the English works of this kind are concordances to the works of Milton, Shakespeare,

Wordsworth, Shelley, and Tennyson. These volumes are of great service in tracing quotations and allusions. Hazlitt's essays, for example, are teasingly full of both quotation and allusion for which no source is given. In the essay "On Going a Journey" he quotes, "The Mind is its own place." A striking statement, but who said it and where? If one has no idea of who the author is, he will have to use the dictionaries of quotations. But to a practiced ear it will sound like Milton. To verify this surmise, let us get the Milton index, and look under "Mind." Soon we find what we are looking for, and are referred to "P. L., I, 253-4." We then take down Milton's poems and, sure enough, in *Paradise Lost,* Book I, lines 254 and 255 we read

> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

Ordinarily it is not necessary to know the author of chance quotations, but it is useful to know the machinery for tracing such things; there are times when it becomes necessary to know.

In the same essay Hazlitt refers to Liberty, Genius, Love, Virtue which have "faded into the light of common day." The part that is here quoted (but which Hazlitt does not enclose because he supposes all will recognize it) is a borrowing which can be traced by using the Wordsworth concordance.

We have now in a rapid tour of the General Reference Room examined briefly, encyclopedias of general knowledge, encyclopedias and handbooks of special fields of knowledge, dictionaries of quotations, of phrase and fable, the best English dictionaries, biographies older and contemporary, histories, anthologies, and concordances. We shall now examine the indexes to periodical literature. The indexes are in the General Reference Room, either at the main desk or on a table especially set aside for them.

As mentioned above, there is usually a set of these indexes in the Periodical Room also.

The oldest index to magazine material is *Poole's Index to Periodical Literature;* it covers the periodical field from 1802 to 1907. As the preface explains, the work is an index to subjects, not to writers, except when writers are treated as subjects. Thus the contributions of Macaulay to the *Edinburgh Review* do not appear under Macaulay, but under such subjects as Bacon, Clive, etc., upon which he wrote. A review of a work of art will be found under the name of the author of the work of art. A review of *Enoch Arden* will appear under Tennyson; but a review of Froude's *History of England* will appear only under England, as England is the subject. Unless the student knows author and title, he may have difficulty in finding criticisms of plays, poems, etc.

Poole's Index is especially valuable to one who wishes to make a thorough study of an early- or middle-nineteenth-century subject. Thus, references to all the early reviews of the works of Byron and Shelley can be found there; and the reception which Darwin received from the public can be found in full, by using this index. The abbreviations are explained in the Preface, though they are not difficult to figure out.

The best known and most used index to magazine material is the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature.* It begins with 1900 and comes down to the present. New numbers are issued each month, which are later bound into enormous volumes, the issues for one to four years making a volume. If one is looking for the late things he must see the latest unbound numbers. Subjects are listed under several heads, author, title, and subject, with cross references, thus making this index more convenient than *Poole's.* Suppose we are looking for an article on the Cossacks which we remember was written by someone named Dorr. Under "Dorr, Mrs. Rheta (Childe)" we

find all the articles which she has published in the period covered by this volume. The second is

> "Last of the Ural Cossacks. Cur. Hist. M., N. Y. Times, 16: 775-81, Ag '22."

If we do not know either the name of the author or the exact title, but want an article on the Cossacks, we can look in this index for "Cossack," and there we shall find the reference to the same article: *Current History* (a magazine published by the *New York Times*) Volume XVI, pages 775 to 781, August, 1922.

If one is doing a paper on national defense he should look under all related heads, such as "Armaments," "Armies," "Disarmament," "Naval Bases," "Navies," "Pacifism." He must try to get both sides of a debatable question. Usually he will get a list of more material than he can read; but the names of authors, which are always given, and the titles will indicate what is most valuable and most to his purpose.

Supplementary to *The Reader's Guide* is the *International Index to Periodicals,* formerly called the *Reader's Guide Supplement.* It is devoted chiefly to the humanities and to science. As its title indicates, it does not list merely articles that have appeared in American magazines, but includes the well-known foreign ones also. The *Guide* covers the popular American field; the *International Index* tries to cover the scholarly publications of both Europe and America. If one is working in a linguistic, philosophic, scientific, or other such subject he should see what material this index contains. Articles are listed under both subject and author, as in the *Guide.*

When one has gotten his list of references, having taken great care to get the name, volume and number, or year and month of his magazine, he must make out his library slip and ask to have the volume brought from the stacks, for things listed in the printed indexes are more likely to

be found in the bound volumes than on the shelves of the periodical room. But a glance at the date of the magazine will usually tell one whether or not it is still in unbound form and accessible to anyone on the open shelf.

The Industrial Arts Index contains lists of articles dealing with industry which have appeared in engineering, trade, and business periodicals. Under *Cement,* one finds more than five columns of titles, conveniently grouped. Sometimes names associated more with literature than with business are found in this index. We find, for instance, William Caxton and an article called "First Advertisement ever printed in the English language. E. Pousland, il. Ptd. Salesmanship 46: 575-80 F '26." The article by Edward Pousland is illustrated. It appeared in *Printed Salesmanship* (University Press, Cambridge, Mass.) Volume 46, pages 575-80, February, 1926.

The *New York Times Index,* issued quarterly since 1913, is a complete index of news articles printed in the *Times.* Every event of importance and every person of importance who has been mentioned in this paper (and consequently in the other Associated Press papers) will be found in this index. In the 1927 *Index,* No. 57, we look up "Poland" and find listed articles dealing with Poland's army, currency, relations with Germany, revolutionary movements,—seventy or more articles. There are also cross references. For instance, if we want to find out about the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, we are told to "see Roman Catholic Church—Poland." If one wants to read the *Times* review of a certain play but cannot remember the exact title of the play, he can turn to "Plays" and there will find the complete list of dramas produced during the period which this volume covers. "Abie's Irish Rose" has six entries, ranging from an account of the financial success of the play at its 2,000th performance, to its opening in Manchester, England. If we want to read

about the sale of film rights, we are referred to "Moving Pictures—Abie's Irish Rose."

References in the *Times Index* are given by day, year, and page, thus: "CORN-BORER—Ed. on plans for its extermination, Ja 11, 30:4." Which means that in the issue of January 11th, 1927, page 30, column 4, there is an editorial on the extermination of the corn-borer. There is a key to the abbreviations, with instructions for use of the *Index,* at the beginning of each issue.

The *Times Index* calls itself "A Master-key to all Newspapers," and so it is, for if the *Times* contained an account of an important event upon a certain day, that is practically a guarantee that the event was important enough to be recounted or commented upon editorially in all the big dailies.

The Times of London has issued an index since 1886, now also quarterly. It is used much as the above. Columns are indicated by letter, a, b, c, etc., from the left, instead of by number as in the *New York Times Index.*

Newspapers, although they are bound into volumes, because of their size and poor paper are difficult to keep, and hence are not as readily accessible as bound volumes of magazines. There is, however, a clipping file of news stories which is more accessible to students.

There are many indexes of books and periodicals, published for the convenience of scholars. Prominent among these is *The International Catalogue of Scientific Literature,* an enormous work in many thick volumes, which lists scientific articles, and books in four languages, classified according to subject: Anthropology, physiology, chemistry, etc. The articles listed will usually be too technical except for advanced students; only a part of them are in English.

3. The Stacks.—We shall now consider the "stacks"—the largest part of the library, though hidden away from the eyes of the library user.

A good library will contain half a million volumes. This is too vast a collection to arrange as the books in the Reference Room are arranged. It takes a great amount of shelf room to accommodate such a collection. Hence, concealed somewhere behind the long Circulation Desk, where books are received and returned, is a part of the library building with many floor-levels, all filled with shelves, with only walking-space for the library workers between. Here the books, after having been carefully classified and marked with "call" numbers, are kept. The number on the back of every book indicates to those who know the Dewey system of numbering, or the Library of Congress system, just where the book belongs in that labyrinth of shelves. When the book is called for by someone at the Circulation Desk, an attendant knows where to go to get it, and when it has been returned after use, he knows where to put it so that it can be found again. The fewer persons given access to the stacks, the easier it is to keep things in order back there.

Since the student cannot go back among the shelves and "browse," a substitute has been devised for him, which also serves as a complete record of all the books in the library. This is the Card Catalog. This card catalog is merely a complete index to the content of a library and is used much as the index to a book is used. Because of constant accessions, library catalogs cannot economically be printed in book form, and so the card system has been devised. It is somewhat like a loose-leaf book, the leaves being stiff cards three by five inches, one item only on each card. These are arranged in alphabetical order in drawers in convenient cabinets. When new books are added to the library new cards can be inserted in their proper alphabetical order. The card catalog in some college libraries is in the General Reference Room, but in the larger university libraries the card catalog and the Circulation Desk are located in a separate, easily accessi-

ble room so that there shall be less disturbance in the Reference Room.

The cards which make up the catalog are, in part, printed by the Library of Congress, and are distributed to libraries throughout the country. There are in the card catalog three or more cards for every book: an *author card,* a *title card,* and one or more *subject cards.* Hence one cannot fail to find everything the library has which is related to the subject under investigation. Let us take an example:

(Author Card:)

Robinson, James Harvey, 1863—

HM
251
R662m

The mind in the making; the relation of intelligence to social reform, by James Harvey Robinson ... New York and London, Harper & brothers[ᶜ1921]

5 p. l., [3]-235 p. 21½ᶜᵐ.

"Some suggestions in regard to reading": p. [231]-235.

—— ——— Copies 2-5.

1. Social psychology. 2. Civilization—Hist. 3. Social problems. 1. Title. Official.

21—20447

Library of Congress HM251.R73

—— ——— Copy 2.

Copyright A627806 [s22f5]

This is the card as printed by the Congressional Library. The numbers in the upper left-hand corner are put there to indicate where the book belongs on the shelves in the stacks. It is not necessary for the student who is not privileged to go into the stacks to learn the classification systems. All he needs to do when he wishes to secure a book is to copy this "call number" accurately onto the "call slip" so that the library attendants at the Circulation Desk can get the book for him.

It will be observed that the surname of the author is given first, then his given names, then the date of his

birth (and death if he is not living). The complete title of the book appears, with a description of the contents. The place of publication, the publisher, and the date of publication next appear. Below is a further index of the contents, which also serves as a guide for the librarians in making out the subject cards for this book.

The title card for Professor Robinson's book will be exactly like the above, except that the title of the book will be typed in black across the top, and the card will be filed under *Mind*. There should be two or more subject cards, the subject typed in red across the top of the card. If, for instance, one is looking for books on the subject of Social Psychology, he should look for that subject under "S" and there in its alphabetical order he should find *The Mind in the Making*. This book should also be under the subjects "Civilization—history of" and under "Social Problems."

A good catalog should have a great number of subject cards. Thus, if one looks in the catalog for "Lyric Poetry" or "Cuba" or "Architecture" he should find under these heads cards for all the important books which treat these subjects.

Ordinarily books from the stacks, that is, from the principal part of the library, can be withdrawn for home use for a period of two weeks. Some books which are new or in great demand are called seven-day books, and can of course be kept for only a week. Libraries have a system of fines for violations of their rules, so the student will do well to learn what the regulations for his particular library are. College library rules can always be enforced, for students who are serious offenders can be suspended or expelled from the institution. Hence it is well to abide by necessary regulations and not to plead exceptions. Books from study halls, books "on reserve" in various reading rooms, bound periodicals, and government publications, cannot be had for home use, except that they may

be drawn at nine p.m., and returned next morning at eight. Failure to return "reserve books" involves heavy fines. To draw such a book and keep it all of the following day may be as expensive as purchasing the volume at a bookstore.

The process of obtaining books from the stacks is very simple. Conveniently placed about the cabinets of the Card Catalog will be printed "Call Slips" such as the following:

Author..... Call No.

Title.....

.... Date.....

Signature.....

Address.....

Re-Charge This Book Before Taking Home Volume

The student simply fills in the information, which the catalog supplies, taking great care to get the "call number" correct. This slip he then signs and presents at the Loan Desk. In a few moments, if the book is in, it will be brought him. He can now use this book in any room in the library; but on a call slip charge, he *cannot take it away from the building.* If he wants the volume for home use, he must re-charge the book; that is, he must sign the card on the back and have the charge entered against him at another part of the Circulation Desk. Not until the proper record is made is he free to remove the book from the library. But if the book is available when he asks for it, the process of charging takes but a moment. If the book is out, he can ascertain at the desk if it is on reserve

in a study-hall, or, if lent out, how long it has been out; sometimes he may have it called in for his use. Librarians are usually glad to do anything possible to facilitate the student's work.

Bound volumes of the periodicals, also kept in the stacks, are likewise obtained by writing on a call slip enough of the information obtained from the *Reader's Guide* or other index so that the attendants at the Circulation Desk can find the volume. When books thus charged on a call slip for use in the library are returned to the desk, the slip, the only evidence of the charge, is destroyed.

We have so far described the Reference Room as if the student were thrown wholly upon his own resources while there. Everyone should of course make himself as independent as possible in the use of reference material; but when he really needs help he should not hesitate to ask for it. In the Reference Room will be found one or several reference librarians who have expert knowledge of all the materials and mechanics of library research, and they will be of great assistance in time of real need. Moreover, their knowledge is not confined to material in the Reference Room. They will be able and glad to assist the student in searching for every sort of material which a library contains. The reference librarians should be appealed to when assistance is needed to interpret the card catalog.

II

Taking Notes

Up to this point we have been explaining the layout of a library and the machinery by which one obtains the material which he needs. We have now to consider the

actual use of library materials, once he has, by use of card catalog and indexes, got them in his possession.

We read the books and articles which we have obtained and usually get the drift of their content quite easily. But our memories are not very trustworthy, nor very capacious. And supposing we are reading twenty articles preparatory to writing a paper on, let us say, some phase of jazz music. We shall soon be asking ourselves,—Who said what? And, Is this exactly what was said? Obviously the only safe thing to do is to take notes.

For this purpose a small loose-leaf notebook is good, but cards three by five inches in size are better. Whether cards or sheets are used, too much must not be written on each. Put only one topic on a card, and indicate carefully:

1. Exact source.
2. Whether what you set down is exact quotation, or paraphrase, or a comment of your own.

The more one knows about the subject in hand, the more skillful he will be in picking the significant ideas out of an article. If one knows the field but slightly when he begins his note-taking, he had better take rather full notes, for he cannot yet tell what he is going to need. It is better to have too many notes than too few. In fact, it is always well to have so much evidence that one can use only the best and discard the remainder.

The special feature of the card system with one item on a card is that the cards can be shuffled, grouped, and arranged into a sequence so that they form a virtual outline for the paper. A glance back at the outlines of "The Causes of Crime," "Aaron Burr," and "The Story of Jazz" will show how true this is. Let us look at the last. Supposing we are writing on this subject; we have done all the reading we intend to do, and have thought about what we have read; the subject has begun to take shape. We now know that we are not merely writing three thousand

words about jazz music, but have decided to show the origin and nature of this popular new type. We have decided on our points and their order. We now arrange the cards on which we have written our source material. We no longer keep together all of the cards made from one article. Instead, we put into one pile all of the cards on "The Beginning of Jazz," and into another pile all those about "The Instrumentation of Jazz"—and continue in this manner until our main points are all covered. Then we sort and arrange the material in each pile to accord with our subpoints. Now our "raw material" is in working shape, and we have only to begin composing our paper. Our success, of course, depends upon our ability to assimilate the material which we have in our notes, to fuse it into a coherent whole, to point it toward a specific purpose. A poor thinker will make a botch of vital ideas just as readily as a poor cook will spoil the best ingredients. There must be a firm framework on which to build. The notes may be, on the one hand, more or less dry bones (such as statistics) into which the writer must breathe new life; or, if exact quotations, they may be so superior to the young writer's own phraseology that they appear too much like oases in a desert.

The following is offered as typical of the process which one would go through in getting material for such a paper as "The Anatomy of Jazz."

Reader's Guide lists an article on Jazz in Volume LXVII of *Current Opinion*. The student makes out his call slip, secures Volume LXVII, and reads his article. He makes out as many cards as the content of the article seems to warrant. The following specimens will give an idea of how a systematic student would proceed:

He may make one or two more cards before turning this volume back, depending upon how much more there is in the article that seems to him to be valuable. One is likely to take the fullest notes on the first articles read.

Jazz – What is it?

Mr. Brockway: "Jazz is ordered and calculated noise. It is a compound of qualities, both rhythmic and melodic. It seeks, and with absolute success be it said, to sweep from our minds all simultaneous considerations of other things, and to focus our attention upon its own mad, whirling, involved self."

Cur. Opin. 67:97-99

Jazz – Its Origin

According to Howard Brockway its origin is ancient and Oriental. He recognized its essentials in a Siamese band.

E. M. King says it was developed in Chicago. May be the result of the combination of German bands, hurdy-gurdy players, tambourine players, ferry-boat whistles – the result of the attempt to assimilate 39 races.

Cur. Opin, 67:97-99

Jazz – What is it?

Mr. King thinks the word jazz a ragged combination of letters that suggests bumping and snorting, wind and banging blinds, broken glass and the devil-may-care back of it all.

Cur. Opin. 67:97-99

After he has read several articles on one subject he begins to notice that they repeat each other. Then he of course takes notes upon only the new contributions.

It helps to put a little title—"Jazz, its origin," etc.—at the head of each card. Then when one begins to sort them, he does not have to read each card to ascertain the content. At the bottom of every card the exact source must be written very accurately, for even though one does not intend to use footnotes in his paper, he must somehow give credit for all borrowings.

Notes on an entire volume which one reads for any purpose—to acquire background for a paper, as collateral reading for a history course, or because one wants to fill an obvious gap in his range of knowledge—can also be taken upon cards as shown above, and the cards can be filed for future use, either according to subject or all together under the title of the book. Here again one will probably make notes of only what seems new and significant. What is already familiar need not be written up—unless one wants his notes to remind him of the source of familiar or famous ideas.

Notes which are a digest or summary of the content of a volume can also conveniently be taken in a loose-leaf notebook, just as one takes his lecture notes. The pages should be marked with headings and numbers so that they can easily be kept in order.

The personal equation in note-making is very large, because of the differences in mental equipment, interests, and habits of the persons making the notes. A dozen intelligent students listening to a man who knows how to lecture, or reading a book by one who knows how to write will agree fairly well as to what the main points, what the important ideas of the lecture or book are. But what these students write will vary not only as to the form of expression, but also as to content. The form of expression varies of course because where one student sets down the

significant, the key or topic, sentence exactly as it was spoken or printed, enclosing it in quotation marks, another uses a free paraphrase, a third condenses and abbreviates. But the fourth student may not set down the sentence at all, because the idea has long been familiar to him, and so does not seem worth writing into his notes.

Notes taken for one's own use differ from the usual abstract, summary, or *précis*. In the latter the aim is to present the essentials of the discourse in as condensed a form as possible, taking care to give each main idea the same stress which it received in the original, and to give to each idea an amount of space which accords with the whole scale of the condensation. Say we have reduced a three-thousand-word essay to one hundred and fifty words. Then a main topic which was developed in five hundred words in the original should get about twenty-five words—one fairly long sentence—in the abstract. But notes are taken, not always as a digest of what is heard or read, but often as props to the memory: to put into permanent form that part of a lecture or book which is new or which for some reason is difficult to remember. This is a thoroughly justifiable procedure. However, students often take notes too copiously, and without discrimination; they fix too little in the mind at the time of hearing the lecture or reading the book.

Students sometimes say that it is impossible to take notes on a certain professor's lectures. And sometimes they are right. Unless lecture material is presented in an orderly manner, grouped about main points which are made to stand out, and unless it is given at moderate speed, the student who tries to take notes has a difficult task. It goes without saying that the lecturer should have a sufficiently powerful voice, and clear enunciation, and that the acoustic properties of the lecture room should be at least fair.

A good classroom lecture should begin with an intro-

duction which maps out the territory that day to be covered. When each new heading or main point is presented it should be clearly labeled. All important points should be enforced by examples and illustrations. This method not only clarifies and makes concrete what before was abstract and hazy, but creates variety and interest. Further, it gives the student time in which to jot down the essential ideas. As the lecturer proceeds he should indicate not only what the important points are, but what their relation is to each other.

Notes, whether on cards or in a loose-leaf book, can be taken in two ways. They may be written as solid prose, with paragraph indentations to indicate the main divisions, or they may be taken as analytical or sentence outlines. The latter method is the more difficult, especially with an indifferent lecturer; but the outline form, because it shows the relationship of ideas to each other, is the more effective for reviewing. In paragraphs, or in outline form, notes need not, of course, be always in complete sentences. An intelligent use of ellipsis is a great time saver. In any case, be systematic and neat. Often it pays to revise and rewrite notes.

The student should ask himself when he takes notes of a lecture or of printed matter:

1. Have I recognized the really significant ideas?
2. Have I given each point the right amount of emphasis?
3. Have I omitted anything that should be included —the purpose of these notes considered?

EXERCISES

1. Attend a public lecture, taking full notes. Compare your notes with the report which appears in the newspapers. Account for the differences.

2. (a) Read an essay or article on some subject of interest to you and take full notes upon it, written on note-book paper and in solid prose form.

(b) Try, without again referring to the article, to rewrite your notes as an analytic outline.

(c) If you have difficulty, what is the reason for your difficulty?

III

Literary Ethics, Footnotes, Bibliography

Assuming that the student has in mind the differences between originality, imitation, and plagiarism pointed out in an earlier chapter, we shall now concern ourselves with the accepted ways of using material which we have gathered in our library research, in listening to lectures, and in interviews.

In a discussion of the use of borrowed material we have to consider the material from two points of view: its *content* and its *form*. We do not wish to make any sharp distinction between content and form, but it is convenient to consider them separately.

Let us take content first. When a man discovers a scientific, historical, or other fact, or a relationship between facts which no one has published (*i.e.*, made known) before, he has a certain proprietary right in that fact. Thus Einstein first propounded the theory of relativity and Dr. Hotson discovered the identity of the murderer of the great dramatist Marlowe. The publication of these discoveries by these men gives them a sort of ownership of these theories and facts. Anyone who in his own writing or speaking wishes to use these facts is indebted to the discoverers and must make the proper acknowledgment of that indebtedness. This is particularly true when the fact is yet little known, or the discoverer is not generally known. After the association between the fact

and its discoverer has become generally established in the public mind, the necessity of making acknowledgment becomes less, because when the discovery and the discoverer are well known it is impossible to make an undetected theft; people would not accuse one of laying claim to something which everyone knew belonged to another. When the source of the material used is common knowledge it would of course be pedantry to make specific reference to the author. Everyone now associates Einstein with the theory of relativity, Darwin with evolution, Freud with psychoanalysis, the Wright brothers with the airplane. Hence, unless the writer is making use of some particular part of the work of these men which is not generally known or generally associated with their names, no acknowledgment need be made. But if the writer is using such comparatively little-known facts or theories as Dr. Hotson's researches revealed about Marlowe, or Shakespeare's school-teaching, or Shelley's acting in Shakespearean plays, he should make exact reference to the *Atlantic Monthly,* or to the books by J. Q. Adams and Roger Ingpen from which these facts or theories were obtained.

Even the compiler of statistics has a right in the further use of the figures which he has compiled. Moreover, it is to the interest of an unknown writer to tell the source of the figures which he uses. If they were compiled by a known authority or by a responsible society they are of the same value as other expert testimony. Information as to the date of compilation is also of the utmost importance. In a theme or thesis of a contemporary nature the latest figures are the only ones of value. Old figures are valuable only in historical studies, or for the purposes of comparison.

Sometimes it is the *form* which is valuable. The idea may be new also, or it may be common knowledge; but if the form is so fresh and felicitous that it seems impossible

to improve, it should be reproduced exactly and enclosed in quotation marks. This book abounds in quotations of this sort. "I can't write a book which is commensurate with Shakespeare, but I can write a book by me," said Walter Raleigh (*Letters*, Vol. II, p. 314). The idea is not new but it is well put, and anyone who uses this sentence is under obligation to its author.

If poetry is quoted, great care should be taken to make the quotation accurate. If more than one line is quoted, the lines should be spaced and arranged exactly as in the original, and not included solidly in the body of the paragraph. To illustrate: Supposing we are writing a paper on the good usage of words. According to Pope, the best words are those in common and present use; for words are "alike fantastic if too new or old." In his *Essay on Criticism* he says,

> In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold:
> Alike fantastic if too new or old:
> Be not the first by whom the new is tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

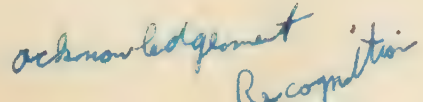
The single line quoted first may be incorporated solidly in a prose paragraph. The latter quotation must be spaced as iambic pentameter couplets should be spaced.

It happens in our reading that we come upon a prose paragraph or sentence which has exactly the information or testimony or evidence which we need in our writing, and which is extremely effective in form. We quote it, of course giving due credit. But sometimes the selection is too long to quote. In that case we condense and paraphrase, although keeping scrupulously close to the meaning and mood of the original. We do not, in the second instance, use quotation marks, because we have not borrowed the words of another, but we are still obliged to acknowledge our indebtedness for the content.

If the quotation, prose or poetry, is very pertinent and

yet we know that it is a little hackneyed, we may merely begin it and let the reader supply the rest from memory; the ability to complete the fragment gives the reader a pleasant feeling of superiority, just as does the ability to answer when you "ask him another." He also likes to recognize familiar quotations in the indirect allusions or partial quotations which you make, for recognition usually gives pleasure and reassures him that he has more than merely tasted of the Pierian spring. Pertinent Biblical material, supposedly familiar, is often employed in this manner. David Grayson on returning from a morning stroll says of himself, "Well, we cannot remain steadily upon the heights. At least I cannot, and would not if I could. After I have been out about so long on such an adventure as this, something lets go inside of me and I come down out of the mountain—and yet know deeply that I have been where the bush was burning; and have heard the Voice in the Fire." Naming the source of such material would deprive the reader of the pleasure of recognition and of completing the quotation; it would indicate a lack of tact in the writer.

This partial and unacknowledged use of well-known material often gives a richness of meaning, and yet robs no author of the credit due him. It opens up all sorts of associative channels in the mind, makes pleasant contacts between the ideas which we are presenting and those already stored in the mind of our reader. Hazlitt, near the end of his "On Going a Journey," says, "Those who wish to forget painful thoughts do well to absent themselves for a while from the ties and objects that recall them; but we can be said only to fulfill our destiny in the place that gave us birth." It will be noted that there is in these lines a pleasant echo from *Hamlet,* "absent thee from felicity awhile," etc.; it is not a quotation as Hazlitt uses it, but an allusion to lines so famous that one could no more appropriate and use them as his own than he



could steal the king's crown from the Tower and wear it on the streets of London.

Quoted prose material a paragraph or more in length can be set off (1) by quotation marks at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last paragraph, or (2) by the use of different spacing in typed material, or of different spacing and different type in printed material, or (3) by the use of both quoted and distinct spacing and type. Poetry, if more than one line, is distinguished by special spacing and type; sometimes quotation marks are also used. For examples, see the preceding pages.

Acknowledgment may be made either in the body of the text, in footnotes, or in both. One of the many examples of the first which this book contains, will be found on pages 20, 21; of the second, on page 33; of the third, on pages 8, 9.

The student had best place footnotes at the bottom of the page, although when manuscript is being prepared for publication footnotes should be set between ruled lines, into the page, as they are in galley proof.[1] Footnotes may be marked with asterisks, daggers, etc., or with figures. If figures are used, they may begin with Number 1 on each page, or may run consecutively for the entire essay or chapter. There is less danger of error if consecutive numbering for the whole paper is used.

Footnotes are of two sorts: those which indicate the source of the material used, and those which give supplementary facts which are thought important enough to add, but which would seem to be a digression if woven into the body of the paper. The explanation of galley proof is an example. When acknowledgment of indebtedness is

[1] Galley proof is a hand-printed sheet taken off the type while it is still in the "galley"—a frame as wide as a page and about thirty inches long. The author corrects the errors on the galley proof, returning it to the publishers, who correct the type. Then the type is divided into page size, and another proof is sent to the author for correction.

being made, enough should be given so that the reader, if he desires, can verify the quotation or reference, or read further to obtain more information. If the reference is to a book, that usually means that author, title, and page must be given. If the reference is to a set of books, in addition to the above, the number of the volume must be given; if to a magazine, the year and month, or volume and number; if to a newspaper, the date, and such information as is necessary to find the "story" or editorial in the issue cited.

Sometimes, as we have said, the footnote may be the definition of an unfamiliar or technical term. Sometimes it may give facts which are necessary for the background of a discussion, but which would interrupt the logical sequence if introduced into the body. Sometimes the note may contain comment of an "editorial" nature which the author does not want to introduce into an exposition that he is trying to conduct on an impersonal and unbiased level.

Footnotes, it should be said, while useful, must not be used excessively. It is argued by some that anything worth including will not violate the unity of the discourse if given in the body; that if facts are an obvious violation of the unity of the discourse when so included, it is proof that such material is irrelevant. To such people footnotes are a sign of prolixity and pedantry.

While there is some truth in the above contention, it is also true that there are occasions when it is useful or necessary for some readers to know the source of a statement, or to have a term defined, or to have a fact or quotation interpreted; but other readers may know these things or may not care about them. There is a certain economy, then, in the judicious use of footnotes.

In the eighteenth century footnotes were so popular that even poetry could hardly be written without copious notes. Perhaps Bernard de Mandeville supplied the most ex-

treme example of annotated poetry. In 1714 he published a poem of twenty-four pages which ten years later he republished with four hundred additional pages of "Remarks." Southey, Shelley, Landor, and others published poems supplemented by rather copious notes. This fashion has long been "out," footnotes being now confined to prose works of a serious nature or to contemporary editing of older works. Although some modern critics have inveighed against their use, footnotes have a place in scholarly publications and their use should be learned by the student.

Many books and articles, in addition to the footnotes, have appended a complete list of the works which served the writer as source material. Sometimes there is a selected list giving the most valuable material in the field covered, and sometimes it is an exhaustive list. The form of presentation varies according to the style-sheet of the publishing house concerned, but the aim is always the same: to give enough information to enable the reader to procure the designated work. A footnote reference is usually as brief as possible. When a bibliography is given the information in the footnote may be very brief indeed. Thus we may in a paper which we are writing refer to the English view of the uniformity of American life, giving in our footnote merely "Bryce, *The American Commonwealth,* Vol. II, ch. CXIII." But in our bibliography, if we have one, we must give the complete title, publisher, place of publication and date.

Bryce, James, *The American Commonwealth,* The Macmillan Co., London, 1888.

The title of the book is printed in italics, in manuscript underscored once. The author's full name is necessary, because while we are not apt to go wrong with Bryce, we might with Smith or Johnson. The name of the publisher and place of publication are useful if the reader has not

access to an adequate library and wishes to buy the book. The date of publication is very important in looking up a page reference, because the pagination in various editions of the same work will often differ. Thus page 122 in the first (1923) edition of *Adventures in Essay Reading* is page 118 in the second (1924) edition.

When a reference is made to a magazine article a good bibliographical form is the following:

CURME, GEORGE O., "History of the English Gerund," *Englische Studien,* Vol. 45, p. 349.

GEROULD, KATHERINE FULLERTON, "The Nature of Hokum," *Harper's Monthly Magazine,* Vol. 155, p. 285.

The title of the article is enclosed in quotation marks; the title of the magazine is given in italics.

Periodicals are issued in "numbers," and the "numbers" for a year or for six months (it varies) constitute a "volume." Six numbers of *Harper's* (December to May or June to November) constitute a volume. The *Nation* also has two volumes a year (January to June, July to December). The issues for this magazine have been numbered serially from the beginning, the issue for July 20, 1927, being No. 3237. When the proper numbers have accumulated libraries have them bound into one book. Ordinarily the pagination of an issue does not begin with "page one," especially in weeklies and quarterlies, but continues in sequence throughout the volume. Thus the *Nation,* for July 20, 1927, begins with page 47; *Harper's* for August, 1927, with page 265. When magazine material is referred to in a footnote or in a bibliography it is better to give volume and page than to give the year with the month or day, especially if the material referred to is likely to have been bound, that is, if it is six months or a year old. If the issues are still to be had in unbound form, it is best to give the date of issue.

Newspaper material should always be referred to by

giving exact date of issue, with page. If the material used is anonymous, as editorials and news stories usually are, or as reviews in *The Times* (London) *Literary Supplement* are, the usual practice is to place the title of the article on the left-hand margin, followed by the name of the newspaper or periodical from which it was taken, with the volume and number, or date.

"Liquor in Canadian Politics" (Editorial), *Christian Science Monitor,* Tues. July 19, 1928, p. 9.

"The Scotland of *Old Mortality*," *The Times* (London) *Literary Supplement,* Thurs. July 7, 1927, p. 467.

The items of a bibliography should be arranged alphabetically. Sometimes they can also be grouped according to subject. Thus, if one were writing a critical estimate of Swinburne, the bibliography might be made up of three types of material: (1) editions of Swinburne's works; (2) biographies; (3) critical studies. Within each group the items should be arranged alphabetically.

EXERCISES

1. Find in some essay examples of quotation, paraphrase, partial quotation, allusion, or reference. How is acknowledgment made? If no acknowledgment is made, why not?

2. For footnote technique, examine issues of *Publications of the Modern Language Association; Review of English Studies; Studies in Philology; The English Journal;* Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees,* edited by F. B. Kaye; *Selections of the Letters of Horace Walpole.*

3. What is the meaning of the following abbreviations and terms: *op. cit.,* ff., p., pp., MSS., cf., *vide, vide supra.*

4. Find the author, publisher, date and place of publication of these books:

Words and Idioms
History in English Words
Biographia Literaria

The Cathedral
Points of View
New Grub Street

5. How many subject cards are there for these books:

Durant, Will, *The Story of Philosophy*
de Kruif, Paul, *Microbe Hunters*
Krapp, John Philip, *The Knowledge of English*

6. Examine each of the following so that you can give some account of their content and use:

Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations* (10th ed.)
Day, *Collacon*, an Encyclopædia of Prose Quotations
Allibone, *Poetical Quotations*
Allibone, *Prose Quotations*
Benham, *Book of Quotations*
Brewer, *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*
Douglas, *Forty Thousand Quotations*
Deems, *Holy-Days and Holidays*
Walsh, *Heroes and Heroines of Fiction* (Modern Prose and Poetry)
Brewer, *Character Sketches of Romance, Fiction, and the Drama* (4 vols.)
Brewer, *The Reader's Handbook*
Spence, *Dictionary of Medieval Romance and Romance Writers*
Seyffert, *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities*
Harper's Dictionary of Classical Antiquities

7. Locate the following works, and observe whether or not they are well indexed.

Baldwin, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*
Schaff-Hertzog, *Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*
Hastings and Selbie, *Dictionary of the Bible*
Hastings, *Cyclopædia of Religion, Ethics*
Palgrave, *Dictionary of Political Economy*
McLaughlin and Hart, *Cyclopedia of American Government*
Monroe, *Cyclopedia of Education*
Hurt, *The College Blue Book*

Voorhees, *Phi Beta Kappa General Catalog*
Cassell, *Cyclopædia of Mechanics*
Bailey, *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*
Cassell, *Dictionary of Gardening*
Bryan, *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers*
Grove, *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*

8. From the latest issue of the *World Almanac* ascertain the following:

(a) Total attendance at the six largest American universities during the past year
(b) Number of persons in the United States over twenty-one years of age
(c) The names of all winners of the Nobel prize for literature
(d) The total number of automobile fatalities for 1923 in the United States and in your state

9. Ascertain the authorship of the following:

(a) "The woods are full of them!"
(b) "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong."
(c) "It is not best to swap horses while crossing the river."
(d) "The head is always the dupe of the heart."
(e) *"Lucrum malum æquale dispendio."*
(f) "Let Hercules himself do what he may,
The cat will mew and dog will have his day."

10. From Brewer's *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable,* or other source, find the significance of the following:

(a) "a blue"
(b) Cambyses' vein
(c) Rosetta stone
(d) Thersites
(e) Vathek

11. In Brewer's *Character Sketches,* Brewer's *Reader's Handbook,* or in a similar compilation, look up the following:

(a) The nine worthies
(b) The Lion of the North
(c) Lazarillo de Tormes

(d) Dorcas Society
(e) Pompilia
(f) Roncesvalles
(g) Sir Fopling Flutter
(h) Jukes (Mrs.)

12. In Harper's or in Seyffert's *Dictionary of Classical Antiquities,* look up the following:

The Jewels of Cornelia	Rhetoric
Hippolytus	The bed of Procrustes
Scylla and Charybdis	Triton
Pegasus	Proteus

13. Whenever you can find them—concordances, special dictionaries, etc.,—look up the following:

The Lion of Judah
"The staggers and the careless lapse of youth"
The widow of Nain
Excalibur
Naked Truth
Handfasting
"If Winter Comes"
The tallest giant of modern times
The White Company (not the novel by that name)
Rosalynde
How many poems James Rorty published in 1925, and where

14. In Moulton, *Library of Literary Criticism,* look up: Thomas Carlyle; William Wordsworth; P. B. Shelley.

15. In *The Book Review Digest* for 1926 find what the general character of each of these books is, and how each was received by the reviewers:

Bruce Barton, *The Book Nobody Knows*
Paul de Kruif, *Microbe Hunters*
John Barrymore, *Confessions of An Actor*

16. Ascertain from the *Oxford Dictionary* who first used the following words in a printed work, in what work the word was used, and when:

beck
environment
incarnadine
international
upaithric

17. In Warner's *Library of the World's Best Literature,* ascertain the following:

How much of Ibsen's work is included?
What is the Episode of Nausicaa?
The biography of Victor Hugo
Emerson's idea of nature from his essay by that name
The character of Hakluyt's *Voyages*

18. Get a complete list of Reference Room works, citing page and volume, in which accounts of the following can be found:

Owen D. Young
Leonardo da Vinci Painter
Richard Wagner Musician
Sir John Harrington
Inigo Jones

19. From the *Reader's Guide,* the *International Index,* the *New York Times Index,* and similar sources for contemporary material, make up a bibliography of twenty items on one of the following special topics:

(a) The present status of coeducation ? institution for both women
(b) The failure (or success) of prohibition
(c) The necessity for uniform divorce laws
(d) The success of the American Merchant Marine
(e) Independence for the Philippines
(f) The menace of professional football

PART THREE

The Forms of Discourse

Introductory

THE "FOUR FORMS"

ALL writing may be divided into two general divisions: practical writing and creative writing. It is, of course, impossible to draw an absolute line and say that here one leaves off, the other begins; but the distinction between the two types is nevertheless fairly clear.

Practical Writing is that which is done to serve some specific and immediate purpose, such as a report, an argument for or against a proposition, an explanation of how a thing is done or what it is like, a sales letter, an advertisement, a newspaper story, or an editorial.

Creative Writing is writing done in one of the well-known literary forms. It is creative in the sense that it is imaginative,[1] and differs from practical writing in that at its best it has no ulterior purpose—no purpose, in fact, other than to please and to represent life and nature as seen through the eyes of the writer. Short stories and novels, plays, poems, and personal and descriptive essays are therefore examples of creative writing. History, when

[1] It should be understood by the student that *imaginative* does not refer merely to that which the writer imagines (or dreams), in the ordinary sense of picturing in the mind that which really does not exist in the real world. *Imagination* as used in this book refers quite as much to the quality of insight by which a sensitive individual sees beneath the surface of things and comes to understand people and the world in which he lives. It refers to the ability to study an old beggar, or an apple dealer, or a society man, and realize what goes on in his mind, what kind of person he really is, what kind of life he has lived. It refers also to the power of the mind to rearrange and create, that is, to that capacity of the mind to bring together scattered, though naturally related, elements, and give them a unified and coherent form.

conceived imaginatively and thrown into artistic form, as in Carlyle's *French Revolution,* Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico,* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* may become creative writing. On the other hand, fiction, drama, and poetry may be made "practical" in purpose, if the writer's aim is to explain or to convince. Thus, so-called purpose novels and thesis plays are written to serve practical rather than artistic ends.

In such a book as this, however, we cannot give attention to all the special forms of writing. Poetry and drama, for instance, must receive almost less than casual notice. The short story, as such, and the novel cannot claim much more of our attention. Obviously, such forms of composition are for the relatively few, those people with talent or genius who expect to specialize in writing literature. But the number of people in the world with genius is relatively small. The majority of students who read this book may therefore be counted upon as normal young men and women who need and desire training in normal ways of expression. The normal way of expression for most people is prose, simple, direct—beautiful if possible —answering so far as may be to the demands of everyday living. In a consideration of the various forms of writing, this book is therefore concerned with prose. Its first concern, too, will be with the more practical modes of prose expression—expository and argumentative writing. It will then pass to a rather general and elementary consideration of the more artistic forms—description, and narration—which also have their practical application in the lives of most of us, in the nature of an understanding which will materially help in our appreciation of the literature we as educated people are constantly reading.

The "Four Forms."—The traditional classification of prose writing under four heads—*Exposition, Argument, Narration,* and *Description*—is not, of course, altogether satisfactory, for the reason that, as is the case with most

classifications, the divisions are not mutually exclusive. Thus, much writing which is narrative or descriptive in form is expository or argumentative in purpose; and, conversely, narrative and descriptive writing of any length will often contain expository and argumentative materials. Yet no more satisfactory classification has so far been devised; and therefore for purposes of study and practice it is convenient to make use of these established divisions.

It should be remembered, however, that the most valid basis for judging whether a given piece of writing is expository, argumentative, narrative, or descriptive is the intent of the writer. If a writer presents his material for the purpose of making clear the sort of person Queen Elizabeth was, then, even though half or all of the article is in narrative or descriptive form, he has really written exposition. If he uses facts to the end of convincing his readers of the injustice of slavery, the iniquity of courts of justice, the inequality in the condition of the laboring man, the result, even though it may be in the form of a short story, a novel, or a drama, is argumentation. It is only with this principle in mind that we can classify many borderline cases. An instance of the borderline type of discourse is what has been called "scientific description." Such are botanical descriptions, geological descriptions, descriptions of machinery. There is a class association, an appeal to intellect and neglect of emotion, about such description that makes it quite distinct from ordinary description. Explanation of the ignition system of an automobile or a botanical description of the trillium is not designed to arouse visual imagery or to please; it is intended to create an understanding of mechanical arrangements—it is therefore to be classed as exposition.

But let us not be too much concerned with what may be thought of as scholarly distinctions. A certain amount of the scholarship of literary forms is useful, perhaps, to every one who wants to read with discernment. But to

acquire mere scholarship is not the best way to acquire proficiency in writing, nor, indeed, in any art. "How is your golf this spring?" I asked a friend. "Oh, pretty poor," he replied. "I bought a golf book last winter, and now I've got so much science I can't hit the ball." Now the best way to learn golf is to observe how the professional stands, holds his driver, and swings at the ball—and then to try it for oneself. After that, to practice, then to study the professional, then to practice, then to study the professional—perhaps many professionals—finally, to practice, practice, practice. That is also the way to learn to write.

It is due to their sincere belief in this method that the authors of this book have been interested from the first in placing before students illustrations of the practice of good writers, rather than in setting forth rules and principles and categories. Memorizing an old-fashioned book of rhetoric will no more make one a writer than memorizing the Chevrolet handbook will make one an automobile engineer. The emphasis must be upon a close study of good models and earnest individual practice.

We shall therefore confine ourselves in the following chapters, as we did in the preceding, to the conditions of writing which confront the student in certain everyday, natural, and typical situations. We shall use the divisions —the four forms of discourse—as the most convenient means we know to the end of presenting as many as possible of the typical conditions under which people in real life write, with as large a variety as space will permit of illustrations of the practice of the masters under such conditions. We shall, in addition, include a chapter on Report Writing, as a type of practical composition in which any one or all of the "four forms" may be employed for the presentation of facts and ideas in various special situations.

Chapter XI

EXPOSITORY WRITING

I

The Nature of Expository Writing

EXPOSITORY writing is usually practical writing. As primarily a utilitarian rather than an artistic form, it has for its end to make clear to others one's understanding of things, processes, and ideas. No form of discourse is more used in our daily life. If a friend, who has invited me to his house for the first time, writes instructions telling me how to reach him—"Take a Grand River car to Woodward; transfer to a Mack car running north; get off at Iroquois, turn to the left," and so on,—he is using exposition. If I particularly like a dessert and know my hostess well enough to ask her privately what it is called and how it is made, the recipe she gives me will be exposition. Or if I do not understand a poem and write to its author for his interpretation of it, or if I have run into the slang word "crock" and must look up its meaning, both the author's answer—if he is so kind—and the definition of my word will be expository writing. Textbooks, reports, magazine articles, and newspaper editorials, presenting facts, explaining processes, analyzing and interpreting all sorts of problems—social, religious, political, scientific—are all largely exposition. It is thus that exposition answers the thousand questions which confront us every day. Parents with traditionally curious growing

boys, and students with inquisitive instructors should alike be well trained in expository discourse.

What is it? What does it mean? How is it made? What is its form, shape, structure? How does it work? What is its purpose? What is its value or importance? Why is it valuable? What was its origin? What will its future be? How was (or is) it done? What did you think you were doing? Why did you do it? What is the exact situation? What does the author say? What does he mean? What do you think about it?—These are types of questions with which writers of exposition are constantly dealing.

Transferred into more concrete terms, these questions resolve themselves into such forms as these: What is *static?* What is *communism?* What is the *clavilux?* How is the clavilux constructed? How is it operated? What do you think of it? What does *equity* mean? What is the law on party line-fences? How is grain harvested in Ireland? How are steel rails made? What is the situation with regard to the production of rubber in Arizona? Of what value are the experiments now being carried on looking toward the manufacture of a substitute for gasoline? What does Chase say about the value of listerine (in his book *Your Money's Worth*)? What did Newman consider to be the purpose of education? What do you believe it to be? What is "Freshman Week"? What do you think of it? What are Edison's ideas of immortality? What are yours? What is Russia's attitude on the debt question? What are the facts with reference to the increase of crime in America? What is the significance of these facts? You have done no work in your classes this last term—why? You say you want to "make" Phi Beta Kappa—what are your reasons? What is the meaning of Shelley's *Alastor?* What is the best way to read a book? How did you learn to write? How can one learn to think? To memorize?

How do you adjust your time with regard to study, recreation, and sleep? What is the meaning of the word "nation"? What is the political structure of the United States and how does it differ from the governmental organization of Great Britain? How is the president of France elected? What was the origin of the French Revolution? What is the future of democracy? Why is patriotism valuable? How good a book is *Ethan Frome?* What were women like in the age of Dr. Johnson? It is by answering countless questions such as these that we get an understanding of the world. The opinion which others have of our intelligence and knowledge depends upon our ability to present our ideas of such things in a manner easy to understand and easy to remember.

The Materials for Exposition.—Since exposition has for its end to convey an understanding of a thing in the clearest way possible, the first step in preparation for an expository theme is to make certain that we know enough about a subject to justify our attempt to explain it. The best explanations can come obviously from those whose experience or special study has given such background and first-hand knowledge as to enable them to be sure that they know what they are talking about.

Thus, Helen Wills is especially qualified to explain tennis, and Lindbergh, flying. Thomas Edison is, by common consent, the best-prepared man in America to speak on electricity; Henry Ford, on large-scale commercial ventures; the Mayo brothers, on organized surgery. We always listen to the man who knows. Bennie Oosterbaan, all-American Michigan end, some years ago wrote an article for *The American Boy* telling how he caught forward passes; it was of course a useful as well as popular article. About the same time Raymond Baer, stellar guard on Oosterbaan's eleven, wrote an essay for his English teacher telling how he "made" his first football team. The teacher still remembers and talks about this essay—it had in it

the ring of authenticity. Not long ago one of our magazines offered prizes for the best essays by college students. The article taking first place, an account of the taxicab business, was written by a student who had actually lived the life of a taxi driver and was wise enough to write on the basis of his experience.

But there are times when one needs or wants to write on subjects either outside of, or wider than, his experience. In that case it is necessary to gather the materials and to study them sufficiently to get an understanding of them. So much has been said on the subject of assembling materials and thinking them through, in sections of previous chapters—particularly Chapters IV, VIII, X—that it would be superfluous to add more. But the student who does not have these passages well in mind should reread them here.

Analysis of Materials.—The general subject of analysis (or division and organization) has also been discussed in an earlier chapter (Chapter VIII) and need be touched upon now only in its special application to exposition, especially in its relationship to definition. Much of our mental activity consists in tearing down, in prying apart. Often there must be a physical activity to assist in the analytic process. We drill into the earth, blast rock, bring up samples from the ocean's floor, separate chemical compounds, vivisect animals, and dissect human bodies. We divide into what for certain purposes are irreducible minima, and then we resort to the most powerful lenses to carry the division further. The elements which we get we arrange into classes according to the characteristic likenesses and differences, and the classes we then arrange into hierarchies. Frequently we make definitions which assist us in our encounters with new phenomena. Largely by the processes of division and classification we have built up such sciences as physiology, chemistry, zoölogy, botany, mineralogy, geology. We have scrutinized our political,

economic, and social activities, and as a result we have organized bodies of more or less secure information which we call political science, economics, sociology, ethics. The mind early probed into itself and evolved logic, metaphysics, æsthetics; more recently, various schools of psychology.

In building up these bodies of knowledge, especially those of the second group, analysis was not in itself sufficient. We have already noted that in certain cases the analysis led to a complete or partial classification,—as in botany. In other cases the analysis was aimed at an opposite sort of process: we took apart only that we might abstract certain elements for the making of new compounds, or theories, or ideas. The destructive process is usually for the purpose of clearing the way for a constructive process; analysis is followed by synthesis. Analysis is preliminary either to the making of a complete classification or to definition.

The processes just described apply to small as well as large units of knowledge. The secret of success in exposition lies largely in the writer's power to simplify his subject. Did you ever go into a room strewn about with books—boxes of books, disorderly piles of books—and try to find something? And then have you gone into that same room later, when those books had been neatly and systematically arranged, and looked for your title? Everything was now made easy. When we analyze and outline our ideas we do just that: we make things easy for the reader. We likewise simplify when we evolve definition, for definition is a synthetic process through which from the loose ends of unclear ideas we make tight and serviceable generalizations. Writers who do not thus analyze and organize and simplify can never produce successful exposition. And this is true, no matter how familiar the subject, no matter how abundant the material. That is why the unskilled teacher who has not yet learned to sys-

tematize his ideas flounders so pitifully in front of his class. It is also the reason that the successful man of affairs, who, though he knows his subject perfectly, yet does not realize the necessity for organization and simplification as a prelude to clear expression, often makes a sorry mess of things when asked to write or speak on his special topic.

The pages that follow are devoted to a study of the methods used by successful writers in making their meaning clear. There is here no attempt at a complete classification of such methods; the examples given merely typify the almost endless possibilities. It may be observed, however, that, following the processes of analysis, of generalization, or of both combined, a writer will usually proceed in one of three ways, though he often combines any two, or all of them: (1) he will proceed from his generalization—the seeing of the universal in the particulars, as Plato put it—and produce a definition; (2) he will present his subject in an orderly development of thought according to the divisions which have emerged in his analysis; or (3) he will present his idea through any one of the literary forms—narration, description, drama, etc. In a book like this, emphasis must obviously be placed upon the first two methods. The third can be considered only in special cases, where one of the literary forms is used as an auxiliary in explanatory passages.

II

Definition

"Are you a Fundamentalist?"

"That depends," you reply, "on what you mean." "Well, what do *you* mean when you use the word? Won't you send us your definition?" Such was the type of question with which the editors of *The Forum* magazine chal-

lenged the intelligence of readers during their extended and popular "Definition Contest" of 1926 and 1927. Other specific questions were: Are you a "Good Sport"? Are you a "Highbrow"? Is there any "Humor" in your make-up? What do you mean when you use the word "Patriotism"? "Tolerance"? What, do you believe, is "Heaven"? And thousands of readers, evidently eager to make their own conceptions of these terms known, wrote and sent in their definitions.

"That depends on what you mean": such are the words with which any thoughtful man must preface a reply to questions of this sort. "Define your terms; then I can tell you whether I am a fundamentalist, a highbrow, or a good sport. But until then you may be talking of one thing, I of another." Definition is an attempt at accuracy in the use of language. It occurs in response to a demand for exact thinking and exact expression. It has for its purpose to put limits upon a thing or an idea, to confine, to circumscribe, to place an object in its proper class, to indicate its distinctive qualities, to show how it is different from all other things—in short, to identify it as completely as is verbally possible. Definition thus becomes, of all devices in language, one of the most useful for careful thought and satisfactory communication. It is a foe to the indefinite and vague in idea and expression. It is the one test to put to intellectual slovens who habitually talk in generalities. It is the only answer to "What are you talking about?" "What do you mean by this word?" It represents the perpetual endeavor to drive language back to precise and elemental meanings, to put the interchange of ideas upon a common level of mutually intelligible symbols.

In science, of course, definition is indispensable. Science first analyzes, then generalizes, or defines. One of the efforts of science is to reduce all possible knowledge to classifications; in other words, its hope is to define, ulti-

mately, everything in the universe. A constant question is, What is it?—What is magnetism? What electrolysis? What are growth glands? What vitamins? Some of the conflicting replies submitted to *The Forum* in its contest illustrate the difficulty of arriving at acceptable definitions, especially of nonscientific terms which have been used for a long time and so have acquired varied connotations. Thus the "Good Sport" is held to be both a positive and a negative type:

A Good Sport is a lazy, good-for-nothing, unambitious laggard who is content to spend his life in idle enjoyment. He is generally harmless and good-natured but useless and easy-going. Among his attributes are kindliness and generosity,—he would give his proverbial last shirt for a friend, but seldom has one to give. In short: a Good Sport is a durn fool who hasn't the sense to realize it.

(*Gerald McOsker, Albuquerque, New Mexico.*)

A Good Sport wins without crowing and loses without crying.

A Good Sport is a combination of a hero, a martyr, and a humorist, with a deep sense of justice acknowledging the rights of others at the cost of his own disadvantage and discomfort, relieving the harsh realities in life's drama with the brighter and warmer colors of good fellowship and generosity without spoiling the comedy through self-love and false susceptibility. He can smile, when it rains on a picnic day, laugh at a joke about himself, shake hands with a man who inadvertently knocks him down with his car, forgive the friend who marries the girl he loves, and die on the battlefield for his country with a smile on his lips.

(*O. F. Page, Fredonia, New York.*)

A "Highbrow" is exalted by one writer, depreciated by another:

Highbrow,—a person who has a superficial knowledge of anthropology, economics, inherent sin, the fourth dimension, and is familiar with some of the writings of Browning, Bacon, Shakespeare, Thackeray, and Euripides; who knows that Gibbon wrote *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire;* who professes great admiration for

Henry Cabot Lodge, Woodrow Wilson, and Theodore Roosevelt, and who frequents grand opera. In brief, a highbrow is one who affects superiority of mentality and conduct. *(M. K. Huntington, Ansonia, Conn.)*

The person who reads *The Forum* or *The Atlantic* when a popular weekly is within reach is a highbrow. He lives on intellectual bread and meat, rather than on milk or candy or sedatives or intoxicants. He entertains an idea or thought only after weighing, testing, and measuring it. He does not reject the best in literature merely because the perusal of it necessitates his exercising his mind. He climbs the mountain because he likes the purer air and nobler view, and looks down on his fellows not with an air of superiority, but to point out for them the path. *(Vinton A. Holbrook, Los Angeles, Calif.)*[1]

According to the education, the past experiences, and the temperament of any two people, their definitions of many of our most commonly used terms will differ. To a person primarily interested in commercial and practical success, *education* means the sort of training which can be put to immediate use in a trade or a profession; but William James thought it chiefly valuable in its ability to help one know a good man when he sees one, and to Matthew Arnold it meant essentially broad culture and refinement of spirit, an escape from Philistinism, an understanding of the true meaning of sweetness and light. In Great Britain, "nut" is a complimentary term applied to one who does something particularly well—Helen Wills is a "nut" at tennis; but in America a "nut" is something quite different. All this illustrates the care with which we must use language. If we wish to make ourselves understood with any exactitude, we must learn, especially where meanings are debatable, to be perpetually defining our terms.

Experienced writers show themselves to be quite aware

[1] The definitions of the Good Sport are from *Forum*, Feb., 1929, pp. 243, 244; the definitions of Highbrow, from *Forum*, Nov., 1926, p. 724.

of this need. Matthew Arnold, about to launch into a series of critical essays, defines criticism as a "disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." Mr. Courtney, writing in the *Fortnightly Review,* prefaces his discussion of melodrama by a definition:

I mean by melodrama an exaggeration in the drawing of character, the sacrifice of a good deal of probability in order to accentuate the situation, and a noticeable want of connection between the motives and acts of the personages involved.

Woodrow Wilson, delivering a Phi Beta Kappa address at Yale University, pauses to define a word much bandied about, but seldom understood:

I suppose that this is a sufficient working conception of *pedantry* to say that it is knowledge divorced from life. It is knowledge so closeted, so desecrated, so stripped of its significance and of the significance of life itself, that it is a thing apart and not connected with the vital processes in the world about us.

Knowing how men disagree on the subject of Taste as applied to literature and art, Blair explains his own use of the word.

Taste, as I before explained it, is ultimately founded on an internal sense of beauty, which is natural to men, and which in its application to particular objects is capable of being guided and enlightened by reasons.

—*Lectures on Belles Lettres.*

In his essay *What is a Classic?* Sainte-Beuve gives us a much-needed definition.

A true classic, as I should like to hear it defined, is an author who has enriched the human mind, who has really augmented its treasures, who has made it take one more step forward, who has discovered some unequivocal moral truth, or has once more seized hold of some eternal passion in that heart where all seemed known

and explored; who has rendered his thought, his observation, or his discovery under no matter what form, but broad and large, refined, sensible, sane, and beautiful in itself; who has spoken to all in a style of his own which yet belongs to all the world, in a style which is new without neologisms, new and ancient, easily contemporaneous with every age.

Characteristics of a Good Definition.—Lyman Abbott defined an "open shop" thus:

> An open shop is one in which union men and nonunion men may work side by side upon equal terms.

Swift defined style as "Proper words in proper places." Huxley defined protoplasm as "the physical basis of life." Poetry has been defined as "the expression of the imagination in rhythmical and emotional language."

In each of these examples there is the same delimiting process: the term to be defined is put into a definite and sufficiently inclusive class (genus) and then is distinguished from other members of that class (differentia).[1] Thus:

Term		*Genus*	*Differentia*
An open shop	is	one in which union men and nonunion men may work side by side	upon equal terms.
Style	is	proper words	in proper places.
Protoplasm	is	the physical basis	of life.
Poetry	is	the expression of the imagination	in rhythmical and emotional language.

It will be observed that the tighter the genus the more easy it is to make differentia. It is easier to pick your lost

[1] Sometimes the order of the logical definition is inverted. Thus, "A noun is a name-word." Here "word" is the genus; "name" (used adjectively) is the differentia.

glove out of half a dozen found than out of two hundred found. In the first definition the word "one" alone would indicate no proper genus because it includes too much—it would be a mere tautology: it tells us what we already know: An open *shop* is a *shop*. But "one in which union and nonunion men may work side by side," begins to have some significance. Now we have excluded all shops in which this is not possible. But an important differentiation still needs to be made: unless the nonunion men can work with the union men "upon equal terms" this is not an open shop. In the definition of poetry the genus is "expression of the imagination." This is a better genus than merely "expression," because it excludes more—it excludes expression of the reason, of the will, of mere emotion. But it is evident that painting, music, sculpture, and novels are also expressions of the imagination, and hence a differentia must be set up. To be poetry, this imaginative expression must be in "rhythmical and emotional language."

If the genus is too inclusive it makes the differentia difficult or impossible to formulate. A student wishes to define conscience and begins vaguely, "Conscience is something which . . ." "Something" is of no value as a genus because it is all-inclusive and entirely vague. "Mental activity" or "faculty" is better; "the moral sense within one" is still more definite. The differentia—"which distinguishes between right and wrong in conduct" or "which urges to right conduct"—is now easy to make. We usually have difficulty in defining abstract terms because we cannot find a proper genus.

While a definition is always a predication, every predication is not a definition. "In English the adjective precedes the noun," is a predication, but it is not a definition. It contains neither genus nor differentia, only an accidental and irrelevant fact. Sometimes partial definitions are taken for complete definitions. Thus, Wordsworth says

that poetry "takes its origin in emotions recollected in tranquillity." But he did not, as has been attributed to him, say that "poetry *is* emotion recollected in tranquillity." In other words, he did not *define* poetry at all, he merely named its origin.

Logical definitions should, where possible, be brief: in one sentence. Yet, though brevity is usually a virtue possessed by the dictionary definition, dictionary definitions are often unsatisfactory to the student—just because of their highly condensed form; or because, to save space, the editor has framed the definition in terms which are as difficult as the term being defined. Students often complain that technical words are explained by the use of other technical words, so that, to find the meaning of one word, they have to look up two or three. Adjectives are usually defined by "quality" or "state of," thus:

Malleolar—of or pertaining to Malleolus. (See Malleolus.)

What We Define.—It will be seen that definition is wholly concerned with ideas, generalizations, classes. We said that this was true of all exposition, but it is especially true of definition. We can define "conscience," "man," "poetry," "novel" because these are names of classes of things; but we cannot define the conscience of Henry VIII, nor Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady*. Individuals or individual works of art may be described, characterized, interpreted, and criticized; but they cannot be defined. The value of definition lies in the fact that it is a concentrated bit of information which applies equally to all members of a certain class. My definition of poetry must embrace *Kubla Khan, Paradise Lost,* and the *Spoon River Anthology*. This, of course, means that the logical definition concerns itself only with the most basic, most significant traits.

From the discussion so far, the following rules for logical definition may be drawn:

1. The definition is formed through the process of placing the term to be defined into a class or genus and then distinguishing the term from other members of the class or genus.

2. The class or genus must be large enough to include all examples of the thing defined, and yet small enough so that the differentiation is not too difficult to make.

3. The definition must contain no derivative of the term being defined.

4. The definition must, where possible, be short and in language simpler than the term being defined.

5. It must be a positive assertion. Negative definitions are never complete.

Types of Definition.—Textbooks sometimes confuse students by too many distinctions. It is possible to give several classifications for the definition, but we shall confine ourselves here to the very simplest divisions: First, definitions may be long or short; second, they may be exact (logical or scientific) or they may be approximate[1] (often literary).

The terms *long* and *short,* as applied to definitions, are necessarily relative. The *short definition* is the sentence definition. It is the form toward which we are constantly striving but which we seldom attain. The scientific definition is frequently put into one sentence:

> The Class Mammalia includes all animals which have a vertebrated skeleton and suckle their young.

A sentence is seldom enough to make a meaning clear, however. A definition is frequently extended into a para-

[1] We are indebted to Professor F. M. Perry for this term *approximate.* It appears in her excellent textbook on Exposition (American Book Company), in which she treats the subject of Definition, as, indeed, the whole problem of expository writing, with fine scholarship and satisfying discrimination.

graph (see Chapter V), into an essay, even into a book. Herbert Spencer needs a rather long essay to define scientific knowledge. Stuart P. Sherman devotes a chapter to a definition of *A Puritan;* and Santayana, a volume to *The Sense of Beauty*. What appears to be a one-sentence definition is often only a part of an extended explication. Thus, in order to define the function of criticism, Matthew Arnold requires a considerable essay, of which the sentence given on page 432 is a very small part. Sainte-Beuve's sentence on the classic on the same page is but a fraction of a longer definitive essay.

Exact and Approximate Definitions.—The exact definition aims at scientific accuracy.

Mammalia include all animals which have a vertebrated skeleton and suckle their young.

Rhetoric is the art of using language in such a way as to produce the desired effect on the reader or hearer. (Jebb)

The exact definition may be brief or extended. Jebb's definition of rhetoric is short, Spencer's definition of scientific knowledge is long. The aim in either case is, of course, to give the precise genus and the exact differentia.

The *approximate* or *literary definition* makes claim neither to precision nor to completeness. Its subject is usually one which will not yield itself to exact classification; its aim is more to convey a sense of what a thing is or what it is like than to distinguish its genus and differentia in a scientific way. Such is this definition of poetry (*Song*):

> Forget not, brother singer! that though Prose
> Can never be too truthful or too wise,
> Song is not Truth, nor Wisdom, but the rose
> Upon Truth's lips, the light in Wisdom's eyes.
>
> —Sir William Watson.

Such also is this attempt to define "Humor":

> Humor is first of all the seeing eye,—the eye of the child who said "But he has nothing on," when the Emperor paraded. Where the child, however, was puzzled and serious, humor is not puzzled and is not serious. It comprehends and smiles; it is at ease in its world. Further than this, humor is indefinitely diverse, speaking authentically in the chubby plausibility of Chesterton, the suave irony of Santayana, the lean grin of Ring Lardner. In profound natures it is sunny and spacious, not without pity; in commonplace minds its detachment becomes aloofness, with a touch of cruelty. (*Elizabeth Carter, Pleasantville, New York. Forum,* Sept., 1926.)

The approximate definition may tell how a thing works or how it is made. One might clarify the idea of friendship by telling how friendship works or acts. Plato did so in his *Lysis,* and Emerson did so in his famous essay *On Friendship.* Professor F. N. Scott, after partially defining poetry as "spiritual nourishment," clarifies the definition by telling what poetry *does* to man: "Poetry lifts him above his sordid wants, humanizes him, opens his heart to all the skyey influences. Like philosophy, it bakes no bread, but it can give God, freedom, and immortality."

The following defines "gentleman" by telling how he is, or may be, made:

> Ordinarily the king doth only make knights and create barons or higher degrees: for as for gentlemen, they be made good cheape in England. For whosoever studieth the lawes of the realme, who studieth in the universities, who professeth liberal sciences, and to be shorte, who can live idly and without manuall labour, and will beare the part, charge and countenance of a gentleman, he shall be called master, for that is the title which men give to esquires and other gentlemen, and shall be taken for gentlemen.
>
> —Sir Thomas Smith, *The Commonwealth of England.*

The approximate definition may owe its force to irony or humor:

A fool is one who is intelligent at the wrong time.

A Poor Relation—is the most irrelevant thing in nature,—a piece of impertinent correspondence,—an odious approximation,—a haunting conscience,—a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noontide of our prosperity,—an unwelcome remembrancer,—a perpetually recurring mortification,—a drain on your purse,—a more intolerable dun upon your pride,—a drawback upon success,—a rebuke to your rising,—a stain in your blood,—a blot on your 'scutcheon,—a rent in your garment,—a death's head at your banquet,—Agathocles' pot,—a Mordecai in your gate,—a Lazarus at your door,—a lion in your path,—a frog in your chamber,—a fly in your ointment,—a mote in your eye,—a triumph to your enemy, —an apology to your friends,—the one thing not needful,—the hail in harvest,—the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.

—Charles Lamb, *Poor Relations.*

Various amplifying methods are applicable to the paragraph or to the treatise of approximate definition. Thus, in a single essay, say on friendship, the basic conception of true friendship might be repeated in a dozen ways throughout the essay, repetition being an important principle in all forms of art: the etymology, *i.e.,* the origin and history of the word, might profitably be told; one should certainly tell what friendship is not; one should try to distinguish it from terms which are supposed to have a similar meaning—acquaintanceship, intimacy, love, partnership, kinship, and the like.

Often the writer of definition begins by the use of a definition which is already known, but which he feels to be inadequate:

According to Littre, a book is a bound bundle of paper sheets whether hand-written or printed. That definition does not satisfy me. I would define a book as a work of magic whence escape all kinds of images to trouble the souls and change the hearts of men. Or, better still, a book is a little magic apparatus which transports us among the images of the past or amidst supernatural shades. Those who read many books are like the eaters of hashish. They

live in a dream. The subtle poison that penetrates their brain renders them insensible to the real world and makes them the prey of terrible or delightful phantoms. Books are the opium of the Occident. They devour us. A day is coming on which we shall all be keepers of libraries, and that will be the end.

—FRANCE, *The Adventure of the Soul.*

The Use of the Concrete in Definition.—Logical definition is abstract, directed to the intellect, as was said earlier. But readers can often get an idea most easily if it is put into a concrete form,—in the form of a picture, a map, a moving picture, a story. The abstract definition of "cyclone" (not tornado) can be made easily intelligible by the use of a concrete word picture or, better still, by a diagram. (How many of the other amplifying methods suggested above would be useful in a complete scientific description [definition] of "cyclone"?) The philosophers have always been aware of the value of concrete example and illustration. Plato, to aid in defining virtue, used the myth of the charioteer driving two horses, one passionate and willful, the other sober and good. In the *Symposium* several characters attempt to define love through the telling of whimsical stories. Bacon explained our faults in thinking by saying we were worshipers of idols, and in a fanciful but concrete way explained what he called the "Idol of the Market Place," the "Idol of the Tribe," etc. William James explains habit as the balance wheel which keeps the social scheme moving within the bounds of law and order.

A term may often be best defined by an illustrative story. In another part of this book—in the chapter on Words—the meaning of patriotism is made clear by the story of Arnold von Winkelried; in this same chapter, too, an "expression" or figure of speech is partially defined by an anecdote from Montague's *Rough Justice.* In one of his letters from England during the Great War, W. H.

Page showed what he conceived to be true hospitality by relating an incident of the zealous self-sacrifice of an old working-woman who insisted on giving half of her weekly wage to help feed Belgian refugees. A teacher, wishing to explain the word *egoism* to his class, briefly summarized the story of Meredith's Sir Willoughby Patterne—chief character in *The Egoist*. There is no better way to explain vividly and precisely what one means by hundreds of abstract terms—like *tact, courage, decency, chivalry, talent, good faith, hypocrisy, injustice, inefficiency, egotism, narrow-mindedness, boorishness;* nor by such general expressions as *good sport, fable, myth, lowbrow, pedant, hero, diplomat, athlete, panic, coquette, desperado.* For to define by the method of concrete illustration is to teach in the poet's way—"with a tale forsooth . . . with a tale which holdeth children from play and the old man from his chimney corner."

EXERCISES

1. Criticize the following as definitions. Which are logical or exact, which approximate? Which successful, which invalid?

(a) Man is mortal.

(b) "Bashfulness and apathy are a tough husk in which a delicate organism is protected from premature ripening." (Emerson)

(c) "Prayer is the contemplation of the facts of life from the highest point of view." (Emerson)

(d) "The degree of vision that dwells in a man is the correct measure of the man." (Carlyle)

(e) "The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests." (Macaulay)

(f) "In its loosest sense, thinking signifies everything that, as we say, is 'in our heads' or that 'goes through our minds.'" (Dewey)

(g) "History is a bath of blood." (William James)

(h) "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of grounds that support

it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought." (Dewey)

(i) Poetry is "the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds." (Shelley)

(j) "The study of the influence of earth's surfaces upon life is ample definition, I find, for geography." (H. S. Canby)

(k) "What is it you said I was last night? You know," he asked after some preliminary talk. "Too—too—I don't know. A very funny word."

"Squeamish?" I suggest.

"Yes. What does it mean?"

"That you exaggerate things—to yourself. Without inquiry, and so on." (Conrad)

(l) "The poetry which is of most worth in a commercial age is that which, drawn from any source, ancient or modern, brings home to men the truth and beauty of the life which now is." (F. N. Scott)

(m) "A paragraph is a small or long division of a connected discourse; an item of newspaper intelligence."

(n) "Wit consists chiefly in joining things by distinct and fanciful relations; such relations, being of the slightest kind, readily occur to those only who make every relation equally welcome. Wit, upon that account, is in good measure incompatible with solid judgment; which, neglecting trivial relations, adheres to those which are substantial and permanent; thus memory and wit are often conjoined: solid judgment seldom with either."

(o) "Economy[1] is rejection of whatever is superfluous; it is not miserliness." (George H. Lewes)

(p) "An *intuition* is any knowledge whatsoever, sensuous or intellectual, which is apprehended immediately."

2. Study these examples of longer definitions. What methods have the writers used to make their meanings clear? Are these definitions successful?

(a) *Geography* is the science dealing with the earth's description. The word itself is derived from the combination of two Greek words: "ge," "the earth"; and "grapho," "to write." Literally it means, "to write about

[1] As applied to expression of ideas.

the earth." There are many things that can be written about the earth, as; the history of its physical changes and their discovery; the measurement of areas and the defining of boundaries; determining the relative positions of places on the earth's surface. Thus we see that geography covers a wide range of subjects and must therefore be divided into a number of branches, of which there are four, so that it may be more easily pursued. Of these four, the first is historic geography. It traces the history of discovery and records the physical changes that have taken place in the earth. Mathematical geography, the second division, explains the figure, magnitude, and motion of the earth; also the method of finding the position of places on its surface. Physical geography dealing with the actual state of the earth's surface in its three great divisions—land, sea, and air,—is the third branch. The last division is political geography, considering the earth as divided into countries. It may therefore be said that geography is the science dealing with the description of the earth from a historic, mathematical, physical, and political standpoint.

(b) The words "progressive" and "reactionary" have been much used in American politics. There has been little effort to define their meaning. They are becoming mere tags which politicians fasten on themselves or their opponents without indulging in any mental process that remotely resembles thought. But, as with shipping tags, the thing which really counts is the destination written on them—progress to what; reaction from what—that is the real question. Motion may be either backward or forward; it may be even going around in a circle.

From my point of view he only deserves to be called a progressive who cannot see a wrong persist without an effort to redress it, or a right denied without an effort to protect it; who feels a deep concern for the economic welfare of the United States, but realizes that the making of better men and better women is a matter greater still; who thinks of every governmental policy first of all in its bearing upon human rights rather than upon material

things; who believes profoundly in human equality and detests privilege in whatever form or in whatever disguise, and who finds the true test of success in the welfare of the many and not the prosperity and comfort of the few.

The civic unit of America is not the dollar, but the individual man.

All that goes to make better and happier and freer men and women is progress; all else is reaction.

3. Write both brief and extended definitions of any three of the following terms. Which of your definitions are exact, which only approximate?

Slang, Geology, Thrift, a "Grind," a "Pal," Friend, Justice, Strategy, Courtesy, Scandal, Parasite, Diplomacy.

4. Define any one of the following by means of an illustration: *Luck, Patriotism,* a *Bore,* a *"Nut,"* a *Cad, Good Will, Good Faith, Femininity, Contentment, Pusillanimity, Knavery, Stupidity, Generosity.*

5. (a) Write an approximate definition of any one of the terms which has recently given you trouble in reducing to an exact definition. (b) Try writing a humorous or whimsical approximate definition of some such term as *The Flapper, College Professor,* a *Bolt,* an *Eight O'Clock,* a *Politician,* a *Critic,* a *"Dater"* (or whatever you call them in your school), a *Grumbler,* the *Self-Satisfied Man.*

Chart the exact definitions you have written according to the plan on page 433, into *subject, genus,* and *differentia.*

6. H. L. Mencken, wishing to show that the true function of criticism is not to be "creative" but "catalytic," carefully defines his term. Here is a definition of a scientific term put into language which any one can understand. Study it; then bring to class two or three similarly clear definitions of terms you have encountered in your biology, physics, chemistry, or psychology books:

In this emergency, I propose getting rid of the misleading label by pasting another over it. That is, I propose the substitution of "catalytic" for "creative," despite the fact that "catalytic" is an unfamiliar word, and suggests the dog-Latin of the seminaries. I borrow it from chemistry,

and its meaning is really quite simple. A catalyzer, in chemistry, is a substance that helps two other substances to react. For example, consider the case of ordinary cane sugar and water. Dissolve the sugar in the water and nothing happens. But add a few drops of acid and the sugar changes into glucose and fructose. Meanwhile, the acid itself is absolutely unchanged. All it does is to stir up the reaction between the water and the sugar. The process is called catalysis. The acid is a catalyzer.

—*Criticism of Criticism of Criticism.*

III.

Presentation

Perhaps the simplest form of expository writing is to present ideas, facts, processes, or situations as they are, without editorial comment or explanation. Thus, E. C. Hopwood is using the method of presentation when he writes:

American undergraduate college life is the subject of much scrutiny and no little unfavorable comment. Charges are made and denied of a distinct decline in the morals of the college student. An older generation shakes its head and predicts disaster. Others see the manifestations of the "new freedom."

—"The Morals of College Journalism," *Scribner's.*

And he is still using this method when, referring to the college press further on in the same article, he says:

College journalism may be roughly classed under four general heads: the college bulletin, the literary magazine, the humorous publication, and the college newspaper proper.

In the following extract Ruskin presents an opinion, or belief:

No man is worth reading to form your style, who does not mean what he says; nor was any great style ever invented but by some

man who meant what he said. Find out the beginning of a great manner of writing, and you have also found the declarer of some true facts or sincere passions: and your whole method of reading will thus be quickened, for, being sure that your author really meant what he said, you will be much more careful to ascertain what he means.

—*Lectures on Art.*

There is here no interpretation, merely a statement of what Ruskin believes to be a truth. Much textbook and encyclopedic information is in the form of bare presentation; so are scientific descriptions and reports. A student writing about the Washington Monument, confining himself to presentation, would use some such outline as the following:

THE WASHINGTON MONUMENT

I. History
II. Location
III. Size and structure
IV. Attractions for visitors

To give uncolored information for the purpose of making ideas clear, then, is the characteristic of exposition through presentation. Two selections from quite different types of writing will further illustrate the method:

The attention, then, that the actual business of writing receives in the French schools is a matter not only of adequate instruction, but of full and definite practice under stimulating circumstances. Composition is held up as a very important part—in fact, the most important part—of the course in the mother tongue. Studies in vocabulary and practice in dictation are carried on constantly in the lower grades in order that the boy may express himself without hindrance when he is once old enough to have something of his own to say in organized compositions. The material assigned is regarded as a matter of great moment. It is intended to develop, in order, the powers of attention and observation, the imagination, and habits of reflection. This material, moreover, is almost invari-

ably discussed in the classroom until the pupil is awakened and interested; and when he writes upon it, he must give the most thoughtful care to organization and general good form. In the criticism of themes, oral discussion holds a large place. Furthermore, the teacher makes his critical suggestions distinctly constructive; that is, he emphasizes the difference between poor work and good, and he leads the pupils to reflect upon the possibilities that the subject matter possesses, rather than upon the magnitude of their own shortcomings. And finally, the training that pupils receive in the study of the mother tongue is reënforced to no small degree by the work in other subjects.

—Rollo Brown, *How the French Boy Learns to Write.*

All the desert animals know the meaning of a water famine, and even those that are pronounced water drinkers know how to get on with the minimum supply. The mule-deer, whose cousin in the Adirondacks goes down to water every night, lives in the desert mountains, month in and month out with nothing more watery to quench thirst than a lobe of the prickly pear or a joint of cholla. But he is naturally fond of green vegetation, and in the early morning he usually leaves the valley and climbs where with goats and mountain sheep he browses on the twigs of shrub and tree. The coyote likes water, too, but he puts up with a liquid meal of quail eggs, eating some mesquite beans, or at best absorbing the blood from some rabbit. The wildcat will go for weeks without more moisture than the blood of birds or lizards, and then perhaps, after long thirst, he will come to a water pocket in the rocks to lap only a handful, doing it with an angry snarling snap as though he disliked it and was drinking under compulsion. The gray wolf is too much of a traveller to depend upon any one locality. He will run fifty miles in a night and be back before morning. Whether he gets water or not is not possible to ascertain. The badger, the coon, and the bear are very seldom seen in the more arid regions. They are not, strictly speaking, desert animals—because unfitted to endure desert hardships. They are naturally great eaters and sleepers, loving cool weather and their own fatness; and to that the desert is sharply opposed. There is nothing fat in the land of sand and cactus. Animal life is lean and gaunt; if it sleeps at all it is with one eye open; and as for heat it cares very little about it.

For the first law of the desert to which animal life of every kind pays allegiance is the law of endurance and abstinence. After that requirement is fulfilled special needs produce the peculiar qualities and habits of the individual.

—Van Dyke, *The Desert.*

"Scientific Description."—Scientific description is a term sometimes applied to the presentation of ideas of form and structure and of process; and to the report of observation for scientific purposes, where this report naturally becomes a descriptive narrative of what takes place. In each instance, descriptive facts are presented not that we may receive sense images as in artistic description, but that we may understand, with something like mathematical precision, how a thing is made, how a thing is done, and how, possibly when, and under what conditions, an action or a phenomenon occurs.

In *explanation of structure* facts are presented to make clear what a thing is like in form or construction. A surveyor describes a plot of ground and draws a map showing division lines, distances, and landmarks corresponding to his description, for no other purpose than an appeal to the understanding. Architects and structural engineers work to the same end. And it is thus that scientists study, analyze, and describe. A description of the flax seed will illustrate the method:

The seed may be compared roughly to an egg. Much as in a hen's egg, for example, we have the shell covering a mass of food material provided for the chick or germ which lies within it, so in the seed we find a protective *seed-coat* enclosing *seed-food* and a germ or *embryo*. Much of the food provided for the flax embryo is already stored within the little plant itself; what remains to be absorbed has been likened to the white of an egg and is called the *albumen* of the seed. The embryo within the seed is found upon careful examination to be already a miniature plant, for it has a stem bearing at its lower end the beginning of a root which becomes apparent when the seed sprouts; while at the upper end

of the stem are borne a pair of fleshy leaves which after sprouting turn green, and between them a tiny bud which is destined to grow into the stem, leaves, flowers, and fruit of the mature plant. Each of these parts of the embryo has been given a special name. The little stem which bears all the other parts is the *cauticle.* Each of the first leaves is a *cotyledon.* The bud at the top of the cauticle is known as the *plumule,* while the rudimentary root is called the *radicle.*

—SARGENT, *Plants and their Uses.*

The problem in exposition of structure is two-fold: not only (1) must the reader receive clear images of the parts to be conveyed, but (2) he must be made to see the relative positions of all the parts. At best his memory must be taxed, but the writer must do everything possible to present his material in the order which is most easily comprehensible. Charts and diagrams are often more successful than the best detailed description.

"Scientific description" is frequently useful in narrative or dramatic writing. It still remains exposition, however. The dramatist presents, in order to explain, his stage-set. The elaborate and studied descriptions of topography and scene in mystery stories, such as in Poe's *The Gold Bug* and Van Dine's *The Canary Murder Case* and *The Greene Murder Case* make situations clear to the understanding. Even Victor Hugo's well-known letter *A* in his account of Waterloo is largely expository in purpose. Such also is the case in the following extract:

Imagine a small ditch such as a plow might make, with broken, irregular sides and at the bottom a trickling, muddy stream, and then magnify that in the imagination perhaps a million times, with scraggly but thick brushwood on the slopes, and you have some idea of the ravine of death where the "Lost Battalion" experienced its six-day nightmare. The ravine proper was perhaps 500 yards long, plugged at the upper end by another slope which made it actually not a ravine at all but a sort of gigantic V-shaped blind alley, the lower end of which sloped out into a flat stretch of

marshy ground, interrupted a considerable distance beyond by another wooded hill.

On the northern slope of the V-shaped blind ravine a wagon road leads into the rocky soil, leaving a steep slope upward from the trickling stream, fed by a spring somewhere in the hills, to the road. Then upward from the road again is almost a perpendicular rocky wall to the crest some twenty feet above.

It was on the northern slope and into the sides of the rocky wall along the road—the Viergette-Binarville road it is called—that most of Whittlesey's men dug their foxholes for the night.[1]

How is (or *was*) a thing done? How is (or *was*) a thing made? A presentation of fact which answers one of these questions is called an *explanation of a process.* Explanation of process is a common utilitarian form, ranging from a cooking recipe or directions for mending a puncture to an analysis of the working of a government. Read this interesting account of how the international bath has been, or is, heated:

The luxury of Egyptian baths has been duly exploited by a well-known soap manufacturer, and the splendor of the great Roman thermæ, club houses, theaters, gymnasia, libraries, and baths in one, has been sung by historians and archeologists from the time of their erection down. The age-old, daily hot-bath habits of the Japanese cause them to look with the scorn of the elect upon the unwashed who are so uncivilized as to omit the daily hot bath.

The heating devices of these and some older and simpler baths are worthy of notice and interesting in comparison with modern arrangements for the same purpose. One of the simplest methods was to heat stones or firebricks and place these directly in the bath vessel. Remains of a primitive prototype of the Turkish bath have been discovered in Ireland in the form of a hive-shaped stone hut, with an opening at the top for the head of the bather and one at the side for entrance and egress. This bath was warmed up by

[1] WILBUR FORREST, "The Lost Battalion," *New York Tribune,* March 2, 1919.

burning peat inside it. When a sufficiently high temperature had been attained the peat was raked out and the bather took his place on a stone seat, indubitably a rather warm one, a friend closed the door and banked it up with sod, closed the aperture about the bather's neck with a necklace of the same, and left the unfortunate to sweat it out, after which process the victim probably scampered home and to bed without any further cooling down or rubbing-off ceremonies.

Japanese baths are heated almost to the boiling point by pipes containing hot charcoal immersed directly in the end of the tub, to the serious detriment of unwary Caucasian toes when long-legged foreigners are initiated into the native-bath mysteries.

The Roman thermæ were heated by a great hypocaust, or furnace, which sent hot air through the hollow walls of the various chambers and also brought up the temperature of successive reservoirs of water from cold to temperate and hot. Charcoal or wood was the fuel.

The Russian and Turkish vapor baths, which were adaptations and successors of the Roman dry baths, were not infrequently produced by the simple process of pouring water upon hot stones or bricks or directly upon a charcoal stove. The immemorially time-honored morning bath of "Merrie Englande" dispenses with the heating problem by the simple expedient of ignoring it. Cold baths are said to have been the fashion among the Angles and Saxons, and the fashion has never changed.

Not all the baths of history, however, were remarkable for temperature or the lack of it. There were mud, sand, wine, milk, and veal-broth baths. Perfumes, pomades, the juices and effusions of strange herbs and plants added to the baths of noted personages. One beau of London was wont to have the yolks of 100 eggs put into his baths, truly a luxurious bath to the modern market mind.[1]

Presentation of a process may vary in method from such simple, direct reporting as is exemplified in the extract just quoted, to what seems on the surface pure artistic narrative or description. One may well imagine, for instance, that the author of the following paragraph is

[1] "An Outline History of Tubbing," *Gas Logic,* August, 1921.

quite as interested in showing how a thing is done as in advancing his narrative:

> Then McDara waved his stick. He lifted his arm. A shot rang out. The reaping race began. In one movement the three men sank to their right knees like soldiers on parade at musketry practice. Their left hands in the same movement closed about a bunch of rye-stalks. The curved reaping hooks whirled in the air, and then there was a crunching sound, the sound that hungry cows make eating long fresh grass in spring. Then three little slender bunches of rye-stalks lay flat on the dewy grass beneath the fence, one bunch behind each reaper's bent left leg. The three women waited in nervous silence for the first sheaf. It would be an omen of victory or defeat. One, two, three, four bunches. . . . Johnny Bodkin, snorting like a furious horse, was dropping his bunches almost without stooping. With a loud cheer he raised his reaping hook in the air and spat on it, crying "First sheaf!" His wife dived at it with both hands. Separating a little bunch of stalks, she encircled the head of the sheaf and then bound it with amazing rapidity, her long thin fingers moving like knitting needles. The other reapers and their wives had not paused to look. All three reapers had cut their first sheaves and their wives were on their knees tying.[1]

Mr. O'Flaherty is telling a story, but had he been writing an essay on *Reaping Wheat in Ireland* he could have found no better way to make clear to his readers exactly how the actual reaping is accomplished. Narrative and description may often thus serve the purpose of explanation. Students of exposition, who wish to make their presentations vivid and interesting, may remember this fact to their advantage.

Suppose, for example, one had traveled in Africa and wished to explain some of the curious customs he had observed among the inhabitants. Could he find a better way than Trader Horn's bit of descriptive narrative in which he presents the Akowa Bushmen in the rôle of actors

[1] Liam O'Flaherty, "The Reaping Race," from *The Dublin Magazine.*

in a native Conjo (theater)? There is a little interpretation here, but the emphasis is upon an accurate report of how these entertainers performed:

Some of their tricks were wonderful. After making a bow to the assembled natives one of these dwarfs took a bow and arrow, shooting the arrow straight up, this he followed by a second arrow which stuck in the end of the first missile. Of course the second was fired with greater force, but was a splendid shot. After this, another arrow was fired at his comrade's head. The missile went in, piercing the left cheek, and protruded out of the other side. The one with the arrow through the cheeks then paraded round the circle of visitors, who loudly cheered the performance. After several other tricks had been performed before a highly delighted audience, these Bushmen left the Arena, returning later dressed in raffia kilts. They then gave us the best exhibition of dancing to music I ever saw. They danced the native sword dance, then the native dagger dance, both of which are really wonderful. The dagger dance was the best. These long knives were placed, handle down, in the ground, from which they protruded about a foot, each one being close about a foot from the other. After nimbly dancing around these daggers on toetip keeping time with music, the dancer quickens his pace, toe dancing in and about these dangerous weapons. The dancing bushmen's feet move so quickly and gracefully in and about these knives that it seemed a miracle how he missed cutting his feet. This feat was loudly cheered.

The next dance was a spinning ball dance. Spinning round on one foot the performer then danced on his hands, then hand and foot, running round a circle like a raffia ball or a ball of string. Looking on, one could not tell or see either head or feet. The performer was loudly cheered amid great laughter. Now came the crowning feat. A hole about two feet in depth was hastily dug and in this was placed a stout banana leaf chosen from a plant by my friend, the Chief's Son. I helped to plant it. The dancer now executed a *pas seul*. First, he gave us a muscle dance, moving the muscles of his breast, first the right one then the left one, always keeping time with the music of the native harp. Then the breasts, first right then left, began to pop in and out, the stomach began to keep time after this, the muscles of the arm,

then the left eye, right eye, then left toe, right toe, all keeping time with the music seemingly without an effort, then the right eye, then the left eye. We all cheered. Now he turned adroitly half round; all the muscles of his body answered his wish without effort. Next he commenced to bob up and down from the ground, first a four inches, then a foot, then he bobbed up and down like an India Rubber ball, always in time with the music. He then spun like a top on his left toe, keeping the right leg extended at a perfect right angle. No lighter than a feather, one mass of motion, he leaped in the air and danced on the swaying banana branch, until, turning a complete somersault, every muscle in his body still moving, he lighted on the ground. We all more than cheered him. Was he human, or what was he? Some said Wild Cat, some said Monkey. Myself, though I could never understand why, I came to the conclusion, that like a man he was a little bit of everything. As the bard says, the flower of all creation.[1]

The third form of scientific description, the *report of observation,* becomes increasingly important with the spread of pure and applied science. Psychologists reporting the details of animal behavior; anthropologists describing ethnological data; geographers and geologists outlining the observed effects of certain atmospheric phenomena in Greenland upon weather conditions in Canada and the United States; astronomers recording with minute detail the topographical changes noted on Mars at different periods of the year: all of these exemplify the method of expository scientific description. Such reporting may be narrative or descriptive, or both combined. In the following example, it will be noted that though the writer is, like so many scientists, half-poet at heart, feeling to the full the dramatic quality, the spell, of the nocturnal scene, yet his purpose is quite plainly to convey an idea of the behavior of migrating birds in the presence of strong light at night, not to describe, nor to tell a story. The extract records an observation at the Kentish Knock

[1] This extract has been slightly edited by the authors.

Lightship, where Mr. Clarke reports on the destruction of migrant birds through striking the lantern. Here, he tells us, losses were sometimes appalling, as for hours birds would continue to strike the lantern and fall into the water. Such destruction at one time continued for ten and a half hours:

> Seen from the deck the three beams from the lantern appeared to be thrown toward the surface of the surrounding waters at an angle of 45°. The birds—brilliant glistening objects—seemed to ascend, as it were, these streams of light by a series of short, jerky flaps performed by wings which appeared to be only half spread for flight. Some of them paused when within a short distance of the lantern, remaining almost stationary, as if to sun themselves in the radiance of the slowly passing beam. Others were bolder and approached the light more closely, but ere they reached it spread their tails like fans, in order to check at the last moment their perilous onward course, and then sheered off, returning in a moment or two to repeat the performance. . . . Others, again, approached the light gently, and either fluttered against the glass, or, as was particularly the case with the starling, perched on the iron framework of the lantern windows and seemed to revel in the light. In this respect the starling differed from the rest, and when one brilliant beam had passed, the bird craned its neck and appeared to gaze longingly toward the next, which was slowly approaching. Indeed, the actions of the starling in particular showed the birds under the spell of some overpowering fascination. A number of the visitors made their *début* with a wild dash for the light, and these, if they struck the glass direct were killed outright; while if the contact were made obliquely, they glanced off stunned, and, slightly injured, descended with a curious zigzag flight which sometimes carried them some little distance ere they were lost amid the waves. . . . To complete the scene there was the singular effect produced by its central feature—namely, the great lantern, which, placed high up on the mast, swung slowly to and fro among the glittering hosts that danced attendance upon its mystic charms. On occasions when the rays were not particularly conspicuous, the migrants flew aimlessly around, passing from ray to ray, sometimes for many hours. It is extraordinary how long some birds will fly round a light with-

out resting. As a good example may be mentioned the case of a Kestrel, which appeared at 8.00 P.M. . . and careered around without a break or rest of any kind until 1.30 A.M. . . . . This bird often came close up to the light, but checked itself by spreading its tail; and it also frequently flew to windward, and then dashed back over the lantern at a tremendous pace. It paid no attention to the few birds which were sometimes present during its prolonged visit.[1]

EXERCISES

1. Using your newspapers and magazines, study the facts involved in some current controversy or other matter of general interest. Present these facts as you understand them, in a clear, orderly statement which any schoolboy could understand.

2. Describe some process with which you are familiar. Tell how something is made or prepared for market, how some game is played, how one should conduct himself at a reception, at a dance or a theater. Have you worked in a factory, or helped make maple sugar, or assisted in a bank, or store, or newspaper office, or at a soda fountain? If so, you should have something interesting to describe.

3. State in simple, direct terms the stand you take on any question in which you are interested, such as term examinations, prescribed courses of study, drinking, law enforcement, dormitories for men, coeducation, hard work, compulsory class attendance.

4. Write a scientific description explaining the structure of something with which you are familiar—of the telephone transmitter, a simple radio set, the loud speaker, of a composite flower (the daisy, dandelion, etc.), the gills of a fish, the human brain.

5. Make a scientific or semi-scientific observation, and then report what you have seen. Have you ever spent time studying the behavior of people in a department store, or in a barber shop, or at the theater? Try it. Birds and animals of all sorts, dogs, cats, ants, are interesting subjects. A student once made an intensive study of the behavior of frogs and wrote reports of what he observed, for his rhetoric instructor. Thoreau watched ants fight and described what he saw; William Beebe has in the same way made all sorts of contributions on the subject of sea and jungle life.

[1] Quoted in ALEXANDER WETMORE, *The Migrations of Birds*, Harvard University Press, p. 128.

6. Make an outline of the steps described in the following delightful account of the processes through which coffee passes before it comes to your breakfast table:

Beyond the fact that you "Don't take sugar, thank you," and like to have the cream poured in first, do you know anything about coffee? Did you know that the pretty, fussy trees (they are really more like large shrubs) won't grow in the sun and won't grow in the shade, but have to be given companionship in the form of other trees that, high above them, permit just enough and not too much sunshine to filter mildly in? And that unless you twist off the berries in a persuasive, almost gentle fashion, you so hurt their feelings that in the spring they may refuse to flower? And that the branches are so brittle that they have a way of crackling off from the weight of their own crop? And that wherever there is coffee there is also a tough, graceful little vine about as thick as a telegraph wire, which, if left uncut, winds itself around and around the tree, finally strangling it to death as a snake strangles a rabbit?

When I see the brown hands of the pickers fluttering like nimble birds among the branches, and think of the eight different processes to which the little berries must be subjected before they can become a drinkable coffee, I often wonder how and by whom their secret was wrested from them. Was it an accident like the original whitening of sugar, when—so we used to be told—a chicken with clay on its feet ran over a mound of crude, brown crystals? Or did a dejected Arabian, having heard all his life that (like the tomato of our grandmothers) it was a deadly thing, attempt by drinking it to assuage forever a hopeless passion for some bulbul of the desert, and find himself not dead, but waking? A careless woman drops a bottle of bluing into a vat of wood pulp and lo! for the first time we have coloured writing paper. But no one ever inadvertently picked, dispulped, fermented, washed, dried, hulled, roasted, ground, and boiled coffee, and unless most of these things are done to it, it is of no possible use.

After the coffee is picked it is brought home in sacks,

measured, and run through the dispulper, a machine that removes the tough, red, outer skin. Every berry (except the pea berry—a freak) is composed of two beans, and these are covered with a sweet slimy substance known as "honey," which has to ferment and rot before the beans may be washed. Washing simply removes the honey and those pieces of the outer skin that have escaped the teeth of the machine and flowed from the front end where they weren't wanted. Four or five changes of water are made in the course of the operation, and toward the last, when the rotted honey has been washed away, leaving the beans hard and clean in their coverings of parchment, one of the men takes off his trousers, rolls up his drawers, and, knee deep in the heavy mixture of coffee and water, drags his feet as rapidly as he can around the cement washing tank until the whole mass is in motion with a swirling eddy in the centre. Into the eddy gravitate all the impurities—the foreign substances—the dead leaves and twigs and unwelcome hulls, and when they all seem to be there, the man deftly scoops them up with his hands and tosses them over the side. Then, if it be a fine hot day, the soggy mass is shovelled on the *asoleadero* (literally, the sunning place), an immense sloping platform covered with smooth cement, and there it is spread out to dry while men in their bare feet constantly turn it over with wooden hoes in order that the beans may receive the sun equally on all sides.

It sounds simple, and if one numbered among one's employees a Joshua who would command the sun to stand still when one wished it to, it doubtless would be. But no matter how much coffee there may be spread out on the *asoleadero,* the sun not only loses its force at a certain hour and then inconsiderately sets,—it sometimes refuses for weeks at a time to show itself at all. During these dreary eternities the half-dried coffee is stowed away in sacks or, when it is too wet to dispose of in this manner without danger of moulding, it is heaped up in ridges on the *asoleadero* and covered. When it rains, work of all kinds in connection with the coffee necessarily ceases. The dryers cannot dry and the pickers cannot pick. Even when it

is not actually raining, the pickers won't go out if the trees are still wet. For the water from the shaken branches chills and stiffens their bloodless hands and soaks through their cotton clothes to the skin. If one's plantation and one's annual crop are large enough to justify the expense, one may defy the sun by investing in what is known as a *secadero*—a machine for drying coffee by artificial heat. But I haven't arrived at one of these two-thousand-dollar sun-scorners—yet.

That is as far as I go—I pick it, dispulp it, wash it, dry it, and sell it. But while the first four of these performances sometimes bid fair to worry me into my grave before my prime, and the fourth is at least of vital importance, as the flavour of coffee may certainly be marred, if not made, in the drying, they are but the prelude to what is eventually done to it before you critically sup it and declare it to be good or bad. Women and children pick it over by hand, separating it into different classes; it is then run through one machine that divests it of its parchment covering; another, with the uncanny precision of mindless things, gropes for beans that happen to be of exactly the same shape, wonderfully finds them, and drops them into their respective places; while at the same time it is throwing out every bean that either nature or the dispulping machine has in the slightest degree mutilated. The sensitiveness and apperception of this iron and wooden box far exceed my own. Often I am unable to see the difference between the beans it has chosen to disgorge into one sack and the beans it has relegated to another—to feel the justice of its irrevocable decisions. But they are always just, and every bean it drops into the defective sack will be found, upon examination, to be defective. Then there is still another machine for polishing the bean—rubbing off the delicate tissue-paper membrane that covers it inside of the parchment. This process does not affect the flavour. In fact, nothing affects the flavour of coffee after it has once been dried; but the separation and polishing give it what is known to trade as "style." And in the trade there is as much poppy-cock about coffee as there is

about wines and cigars. When you telephone to your grocer for a mixture of Mocha and Java, do you by any chance imagine that you are going to receive coffee from Arabia and the Dutch islands? What you do receive, the coffee kings alone know. There are, I have been told, a few sacks of real Mocha in the United States, just as there are a few Vandykes and Holbeins; but if you are very lucky indeed, the Mocha in your mixture will have been grown in Mexico.

—C. M. FLANDRAU, *Viva Mexico.*

7. Read the following explanation of process interwoven with personal narrative. Then make an orderly list showing the stages through which this flax passed on its way to linen trousers.

Father and Mother had a pretty hard struggle to pay for the farm and to clothe and feed and school us all. We lived off the products of the farm to an extent that people do not think of doing nowadays. Not only was our food largely home grown but our clothes also were home grown and home spun. In my early youth our house linen and our summer shirts and trousers were made from flax that grew on the farm. Those pioneer shirts, how vividly I remember them! They dated from the stump, and bits of the stump in the shape of "shives" were inwoven in their texture and made the wearer of them an unwilling penitent for weeks, or until use and the washboard had subdued them. Peas in your shoes are no worse than "shives" on your shirt. But those tow shirts stood by you. If you lost your hold in climbing a tree and caught on a limb your shirt or your linen trousers would hold you. The stuff from which they were made had a history behind it—pulled up by the roots, rooted on the ground, broken with a crackle, flogged with a swingle, and drawn through a hetchel, and out of all this ordeal came the flax. How clearly I remember Father working with it in the bright, sharp March days, breaking it, then swingling it with a long wooden sword-like tool over the end of an upright board fixed at the base in a heavy block. This was to separate the brittle fragments of the bark

from the fibres of the flax. Then in large handfuls he drew it through the hetchel—an instrument with a score or more long sharp iron teeth, set in a board, row behind row. This combed out the tow and other worthless material. It was a mighty good discipline for the flax; it straightened out its fibres and made it as clear and straight as a girl's tresses. Out of the tow we twisted bag strings, flail strings, and other strings. With the worthless portions we made huge bonfires. The flax, Mother would mass upon her distaff and spin into threads. The last I saw of the old crackle, fifty or more years ago, it served as a hen roost under the shed, and the savage old hetchel was doing duty behind the old churner when he sulked and pulled back so as to stop the churning machine. It was hetcheling wool then instead of flax. The flax was spun on a quill which ran by the foot and the quills or spools holding the thread were used in a shuttle when the cloth was woven. The old loom stood in the hog-pen chamber, and there Mother wove her linen, her rag carpets, and her woollen goods. I have "quilled" for her many a time—that is, run the yarn off the reel into spools for use in the shuttle.

—John Burroughs, *My Boyhood.*

IV

Interpretation

"Polonius," said Dr. Samuel Johnson, "is a man bred in courts, exercised in business, stored with observation, confident in his knowledge, proud of his eloquence, and declining into dotage. . . . This idea of dotage encroaching upon wisdom will solve all the phenomena of the character of Polonius." This is interpretation. Interpretation begins where facts leave off. In unmixed presentation, the writer contents himself with setting forth his facts or his ideas as clearly and effectively as he can, and lets his reader interpret them in his own way. But when

facts or situations left to stand by themselves would seem incomplete, ambiguous, or elusive in meaning, the author must interpret them. Interpretation is always more or less of a risky business. Witness the amusing fallacies of the ancients with regard to anatomical, celestial, and geographical affairs; the odd constructions put by the American Indian upon such natural phenomena as eclipses; the awe-inspiring prophecies as to a set time for ending the world perennially made by nervous, overzealous students of our Bible. In his *Headlong Hall,* Thomas Love Peacock satirically presents an eccentric character gravely advancing his views on an old and difficult question:

> Mr. Escot: Clearly the correct interpretation of the fable of Prometheus is a symbolical portraiture of that disastrous epoch when man first applied fire to culinary purposes, and thereby surrendered his liver to the vulture of disease. From that period the stature of mankind has been in a state of gradual diminution, and I have not the least doubt that it will continue to grow small by degrees and lamentably less, till the whole race will vanish imperceptibly from the face of the earth.

Mr. Escot's interpretation will, of course, appear ludicrous to any one who knows anything of the Greek habit of mind. It is spoken with no insight, no understanding. An interpretation is a presentation of a writer's own peculiar way of seeing things. Its value is therefore dependent on unique personal factors, upon keenness of perception, breadth of sympathies, valid judgment; upon a type of intellectual steadiness not all too common in this imperfect, everyday world of ours. Peacock's Mr. Escot lacked these mental qualities, especially that of intellectual steadiness.

But even where these qualities do exist, the personal equation is so great that two minds of equal virility and stability will often see things in an entirely different way. Thus, the nature of life and the universe have been inter-

preted in almost exactly contradictory terms. Shakespeare once wrote:

> As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;
> They kill us for their sport.

And Thomas Hardy said a similarly hard thing about the make-up of our world:

> Justice was done, and the President of Immortals (in Æschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess.

But Browning's version was quite in contrast:

> God's in His Heaven—
> All's right with the world!

Yet, likely as we are to err or to disagree with our neighbors, we must still go on making our own interpretations. So long as evidence, in spite of all we can do, remains incomplete, we cannot as thinking beings avoid attaching our own meanings to what we see and hear. Much of nature is still a closed book; science is still feeling its way. Much of what we call science is frankly hypothetical: shrewd surmises—interpretations made upon such evidence as is available. Many of the theories advanced by scientists are not demonstrable, and when different investigators have worked independently of each other they have often differed in their conclusions. In philosophy and in some of the younger sciences, as psychology, there are "schools" which are at wide variance from one another. Yet these interpretations are pioneering work, and while some of them will be disproved, others will lead to true explanations.

Nothing is more thrilling, more useful, and perhaps more inevitable to the thinking mind, than the interpretation of the facts of life about us. The actions of people, —what do they mean? This man with the top-lofty attitude toward you and your neighbors, is he really im-

pressed with a feeling of his own greatness, or is he building a defense against an inner sense of inferiority? This man who acts like a crook, is he fundamentally vicious, or does he simply lack a sense of values, of decency? Motivation in human conduct is a constant study of psychologists and writers these days, and furnishes the theme for much fascinating literature. Thus, in a recent article in *The Bookman,* Jerome Gray interprets the man Hergesheimer for us. Among other intimate bits of information he declares that Hergesheimer hates crowds. This hatred, we are told, "keeps him from the theaters and was responsible for his refusal to accept a staggering commission from a newspaper syndicate to cover the Dempsey-Tunney fight in Chicago." [1] Those of us who had read of Hergesheimer's refusal to report the championship fight and weren't quite sure why he did it, read this interpretation with decided interest.

In the following passage, Arnold Bennett offers a delightfully ironic interpretation of a typical human action in connection with hotels and dogs:

> The two ladies produced a fairly favorable impression at the outset by reason of their two dogs. It is not every one who has the courage to bring dogs into an expensive private hotel; to bring one dog indicates that you are not accustomed to deny yourself small pleasures for the sake of a few extra shillings; to bring two indicates that you have no fear of hotel-managers and that you are in the habit of regarding your own whim as nature's law.
>
> —*Old Wives' Tale.*

Practice in such interpretation is especially useful to the creative writer, but it is also of the greatest service to you and me, and all of us, in helping gain an understanding of the world of which we are a part. To analyze and interpret the minds of other people in the light of their actions; to pass from that to an analysis and interpreta-

[1] "An Author and his Town," *The Bookman,* Apr., 1928.

tion of our own minds and acts, and so back again to others: that is indeed a way to cultivate deeper insight and a truer knowledge of life.

Works of painting, architecture, and literature offer a wide field for interpretation; for while presentation is concerned with *explicit* fact, interpretation seeks to bring out the ideas which are *implicit* in a work. If the work is obscure in meaning, the risks attendant upon attempts to clarify or enrich the meaning for the reader or beholder are great. Walter Pater in a much-quoted passage [1] told what the enigmatic smile of La Gioconda meant to him; perhaps it has not meant precisely that to anyone else, yet Pater's wonderful passage unquestionably adds richness of meaning to Leonardo's picture.

The interpretation of literature in its simplicity is illustrated in the following extract. Wordsworth had been visiting Crabb Robinson, and they had talked of many things, poetry especially:

> He [Wordsworth] explained the *Beggars* as I understood it; it is a poetical exhibition of the powers of physical beauty and the charm of health and vigor in childhood even in a state of the greatest moral depravity.[2]

To be able to sum up the meaning of a poem in a sentence or two is a great art. Every student should practice it.

No one has written more wisely of Charles Dickens than his friend and disciple, George Gissing. His interpretation of Mrs. Gamp is a classic in criticism:

> To describe Mrs. Gamp as the incarnation of vulgarity would be true, but inadequate; representing vulgarity in its essence, she is also vulgar in a special mode, and, what is more, vulgar through the medium of a strong individuality. No painful observer of her class could, by mere literal faithfulness, have transferred to paper this

[1] "Leonardo da Vinci," *The Renaissance.*

[2] *The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle,* Vol. I, p. 53.

thick-gurgling flux of talk; knowing the lingo, we recognize it upon her lips, but at the same time we know that we never before listened to Mrs. Gamp; fortune never led us into this odorous presence until we were introduced to her by Dickens. Sensual grossness, luring shrewdness, the callousness of base experience, could not conceivably find fitter utterance. Compare her speech with that of Betsy Prig, in many respects a woman of the same stamp, but altogether lacking in originality, of poorer spirit, of thinner blood; Betsy's talk is mere acrid commonplace, the meanness of everyday. Read the quarrel scene between these two, one of Dickens's great things, and contrast the crude personalities wherein Mrs. Prig gives voice to her acrimony with the figured phrase, the pointed anecdote, the inimitable *hapax legomena,* which go to express Mrs. Gamp's indignation. This amazing creature is, in her way, a humorist; she throws out in panting parentheses little sketches of the life familiar to her, which show the amused observer. "Which Mr. Harris, who was dreadful timid, went and stopped his ears in a empty dog-kennel, and never took his hands away or come out once till he was showed the baby, w'en being took with fits, the doctor collared him and laid him on his back upon the airy stones, and she was told to ease her mind, his 'owls was organs." Read her conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Mould in their parlor; admire her vein of bantering facetiousness and its effect upon the hearers. Nay, so superabundant is her facility in the way of discourse that she had been led to invent an imaginary friend, a supposed constant interlocutrix, whose remarks, faithfully reported, lend graceful variety to her self-praise and her compliments. Great in herself, Mrs. Gamp becomes greater still as the author of Mrs. Harris. "I says to Mrs. Harris only t'other day, the last Monday evening fortnight as ever dawned upon this Pilgrim's Projiss of a mortal wale . . ." Of a truth Dickens has here achieved the incredible; the material was beneath contempt; in no small degree even loathsome. In his hands it became a new delight, unique and imperishable.

—*Charles Dickens, A Critical Study.*

What is there in a piece of china? In his own inimitable way, Ruskin once interpreted to an Oxford audience his conception of the structure and ornamentation of a bit of common table ware:

I have here in my hand one of the simplest possible examples of the union of the graphic and constructive powers,—one of my breakfast plates. Since all the finely architectural arts, we said, began in the shaping of the cup and the platter, we will begin, ourselves, with the platter.

Why has it been made round? For two structural reasons: first, that the greatest holding surface may be gathered into the smallest space; and secondly, that in being pushed past other things on the table, it may come into least contact with them.

Next, why has it a rim? For two other structural reasons: first, that it is convenient to put salt or mustard upon; but secondly and chiefly, that the plate may be easily laid hold of. The rim is the simplest form of continuous handle.

Further, to keep it from soiling the cloth, it will be wise to put this ridge beneath, round the bottom; for as the rim is the simplest possible form of continuous handle, so this is the simplest form of continuous leg. . . .

Thus far our art has been strictly utilitarian, having respect to conditions of collision, of carriage, and of support. But now on the surface of our piece of pottery, here are various bands and spots of color which are presumably set there to make it pleasanter to the eye. Six of the spots seen closely, you discover, are intended to represent flowers. These then have as distinctly a graphic purpose as the other properties of the plate have an architectural one, and the first critical question we have to ask of them, is whether they are like roses or not. . . . In any case, however, that graphic power must have been subordinate to their effect as pink spots, while the band of green-blue round the plate's edge, and the spots of gold, pretend to no graphic power at all, but are meaningless spaces of color or metal. . . .

Architecture is full of meaning not apparent to the unskilled or cursory observer. Ruskin and many others have with much skill sought to relate styles in architecture to the culture, the mode of thought, the dominant interests, or the social conditions of the period which produced them. Below is an interpretation of Gothic architecture in the light of the violent contrasts which marked the Middle

Ages: the contrasts between the renunciation and humility of the cloistered saint, and the cruelty and arrogance of the predatory baron. These violently contradictory elements the writer finds in the spires and arches of the Gothic cathedral.

Gothic was created by an age of contrasts. Between Catholicism's highest standards and the well-known practices of princes and of peoples there was tense conflict. It was when that tension and that conflict were most acute in that age of dungeons and machicolated battlements, that the new architecture raised its high and gorgeous outlines: its very construction is an expression of the thrust and strain between one impulse and another in those ages of saint and scoundrel where, in a crowded succession of ingenious devices, men conquered the inertia of sloth by their eagerness to be predatory or to be constructive.

The Gothic cathedral, in other words, is the pitched battle of violent energies. Arc presses against arc at every angle of its complex vastness. Every column and buttress not only meets a thrust, but exerts one. At Stonehenge or Pæstum the support can stand alone and the transverse stones truly rest on the supports. In the round arch even more than in the pediment the powers of gravitation are adjusted in peaceful balance: in the medieval style of the north the adjustment is a balance of power like that which precedes a war between two federations of allied peoples, or like the play of muscles which sets a body in motion. And if the architecture does not move, it is only because it is buttressed by arches exterior to its mass which direct its attack into adjacent ground. While its combativeness knows little lassitude, none of its component parts but are dependent on another. That is the very principle of all domes, all vaulting. But in Gothic the contest of balance is sharper, and this sharpness finds its natural expression in the lines which run from the summit of the vaulting, sometimes semi-circular, sometimes elliptical, frequently sexpartite, to the supporting walls or columns.[1]

The world's great poetry from the Old Testament down to the present has been full of enigmas which have

[1] *The London Times,* April 14, 1927.

demanded the utmost study and perseverance to interpret, and, as a result of this great effort, we have a vast amount of Biblical exegesis and church doctrine, and dozens and hundreds of denominations and sects. In literature we have much disagreement, and a vast body of valuable commentary. The disagreement arises from attempts to answer questions as to the nature or meaning of a passage, the origin of the work, and so forth, when the complete evidence upon which to base the answer is lacking.

Sometimes, especially in works that are two or more centuries old, even though they are in English, the meaning of a single word may be obscure and open to widely different interpretations. The works of Shakespeare and Milton have many such words. For instance, in the lines from Milton's sonnet on his blindness, what does *fondly* mean?[1] The meaning *foolishly* has been generally agreed upon (*i.e.*, explained) by comparison of Milton's passage with other works of the same period or older in which this word occurs. But there are words which have been more puzzling to scholars. In *Hamlet,* Gertrude says of her son,

> He's *fat* and short of breath—
> Here Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brow.

What does "fat" mean? Surely not that Hamlet was fleshy? Some scholars have so understood the lines, saying that the sedentary life of a scholar made him fat. But a more ingenious investigator holds that the prince is short of breath from exercising, and is consequently perspiring; from various citations he shows that people in that day thought sweat to be human fat oozing through the pores of the skin. "In the light of this conception Gertrude's words, 'He's fat,' have the meaning, 'He's sweating fat from his pores'; or, as we understand it, simply

[1] Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?
I fondly ask.

'He's sweating.' "[1] These two examples are based on inference. Yet the use of "fond" to mean "foolish" has such a good etymological basis (see dictionary) that there is no question about it. The meaning of "fat" has less evidence to support it, and hence is an ingenious though plausible interpretation.

Many works, especially in literature, are allegorical or symbolical. They have double meanings, the obvious one being of little importance. The interpreter brings out the implicit meanings which the casual reader may miss. He will tell you that the story of Christian was not the important thing to Bunyan: Bunyan was a Puritan preacher attempting to show mankind how to save the soul from damnation. His great book is an exposition of process put in dramatic form. In satire we have likewise a double meaning. The interpreter knows that when Swift had the Lilliputian candidates for prime minister dance on the tight rope to prove their fitness for office, he was really talking about the social splurging and the campaigning methods of England.

EXERCISES

1. What characteristics of interpretation are evident in the following paragraph?

> Mother used to pick her geese in the barn where Father used to shear the sheep; and to help gather in the flock was a part of my duty also. The geese would submit to the plucking about as readily as the sheep to the shearing, but they presented a much more ragged and sorry appearance after they had been fleeced than did the sheep. It used to amuse me to see them put their heads together and talk it over and laugh and congratulate each other over the victory they had just won!—they had got out of the hands of the enemy with only the loss of a few feathers which

[1] M. P. Tilley, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 1925, pp. 315, *ff.*

they would not want in the warm weather! The goose is the one inhabitant that cackles as loudly and as cheerfully over a defeat as over a victory. They are so complacent and optimistic that it is a comfort to me to see them about. The very silliness of the goose is a lesson in wisdom. The pride of a plucked gander makes one take courage. I think it quite probable that we learned our habit of hissing our dissent from the goose, and maybe our other habit of trying sometimes to drown an opponent with noise has a like origin. The goose is silly and shallow-pated; yet what dignity and impressiveness in her migrating wild clans driving in ordered ranks across the spring or autumnal skies, linking the Chesapeake Bay and the Canadian Lakes in one flight! The great forces are loosened and winter is behind them in one case, and the tides of spring bear them on in the other. When I hear the trumpet of the wild geese in the sky I know that dramatic events in the seasonal changes are taking place.

—John Burroughs, *My Boyhood.*

2. The following is a humorous interpretation of a refractory water pump which was the despair of the three marine engineers whose duty it was to keep "her" going. In what way is it superior to scientific description or explanation of process?

She was like a light woman with three lovers, none of whom really understood the workings of her secret heart. There were times when she seemed to stand there smiling derisively in the shadows behind the high-pressure columns, a sort of demoniac Rima haunting an iron forest. She would start, sometimes, to pump, making strange sounds as though developing cardiac syncope. Softly, softly the plunger would rise and fall and rise and fall, exactly as the inventor, now safely asleep in his bed ashore, had intended. And then, just as I would turn away to attend to the other ten thousand duties in that terrible old engine room, she would choke with rage, stamp her foot, and stop dead. I would tickle her under the chin with a wrench, and she would give a terrific up and down stroke ending with a heart-breaking bang. "Once for all,

I won't," she seemed to say. I would administer cylinder oil through a lubricator fastened to her ear, and she would send out a geyser of unsuspected vapor to scald my arms.[1]

3. Write interpretations of the two most interesting characters in the last book you have read.

4. Do you know da Vinci's Mona Lisa? What does it mean to you?

5. Study again the two paintings that you feel mean the most to you, and write interpretations of them.

6. Try a humorous interpretation of a balky Ford, a runaway airplane, a temperamental cash register, or elevator, or shot gun.

7. Write an interpretation of the character of the man who sits to your right in class.

8. Read Hawthorne's *Old Apple Dealer*. Then write an interpretation of some odd character in your home town.

9. Study the one of all your acquaintances who appears to do odd, unaccountable things. Can you interpret his mental attitudes?

10. Think back upon some action of your own: you snubbed a friend; you impulsively offered a loan of your last dollar; you did a cowardly thing, or a brave thing; you acted dishonestly, or you were more scrupulously honest than usual: analyze your mental state at the time; interpret your action.

11. Observe the smiles of two people you know. One is genuine, the other is too obviously ingratiating; you feel its insincerity. Write interpretations of the mental attitudes behind these smiles.

12. Reread Ruskin's interpretation of the breakfast plate. Then attempt an interpretation of the structure and ornamentation of some common object you see about you—a chair, a needle, a table, a cup, an ink bottle, an ash tray, a basket.

V

Mixed and Special Types of Exposition

Ranging between pure presentation and pure interpretation, are types of exposition which may be placed in

[1] William McFee, *Harper's*, Oct., 1927.

either class, or neither one, according as the emphasis seems to be upon merely setting facts before the reader, or upon giving the writer's conception of their meaning. In some instances we quite obviously have a combination of presentation and analytical interpretation, as in the case with the selection from Canby on page 479. A newspaper editorial is nearly always such a combination. Many times, however, we could classify a piece of writing as either presentation or interpretation, depending on our point of view. For instance, we might, with almost equal truth, call an expository passage which gives reasons, a presentation of the facts as to why a thing was done, or an author's theory of interpretation of the action. Likewise, when we state a belief, are we presenting or interpreting? But, in a book which is intended as a practical guide in writing, let us not inquire too curiously into hair-line distinctions. We do not usually stop to ask whether a thing is this or that when we write; we write to fulfil some purpose in view, and do our best to make it a success. In this section, then, we turn our attention to various expository forms which cannot easily be classified under either of the two larger divisions we have just considered. There is no attempt here at a complete list. In the limited space of a single chapter, only a few typical cases can be given. The chapter on the paragraph may well be reread in this connection, as furnishing complementary and additional materials.

Presentation Through Illustrations.—There is no more forceful method of exposition than that of explanation through concrete illustration. Read Oscar Wilde's little anecdote illustrative of his discovery that the mind of a child is an incalculable mystery:[1]

"It is the duty of every father," he said with great gravity, "to write fairy tales for his children. But the mind of a child is a great mystery. It is incalculable, and who shall divine it, or bring

[1] As reported by Richard Le Gallienne in *The Romantic '00s.*

it its own peculiar delights? You humbly spread before it the treasures of your imagination, and they are as dross. For example, a day or two ago, Cyril yonder came to me with the question, 'Father, do you ever dream?' 'Why, of course, my darling. It is the first duty of a gentleman to dream.' 'And what do you dream of?' asked Cyril, with a child's disgusting appetite for facts. Then I, believing, of course, that something picturesque would be expected of me, spoke magnificent things: 'What do I dream of? Oh, I dream of dragons with gold and silver scales, and scarlet flames coming out of their mouths, of eagles with eyes made of diamonds that can see over the whole world at once, of lions with yellow manes, and voices like thunder, of elephants with little houses on their backs, and tigers and zebras with barred and spotted coats. . . .' So I labored on with my fancy, till, observing that Cyril was entirely unimpressed, and indeed quite undisguisedly bored, I came to a humiliating stop, and, turning to my son there, I said: 'But tell me, what do you dream of, Cyril?' His answer was like a divine revelation: 'I dream of *pigs*,' he said."

In the following extract, Carl Van Doren seeks through illustration to explain what he considers to be the essential distinction between elements of greatness and popularity in literature. He uses the method of illustration:

A book is great when it speaks to the best minds. It is popular when it speaks to the most minds. While this statement does raise the further, and the endless, question which are the best minds, it is at least simple enough to serve as a point of departure into argument and illustration.

Illustration comes properly before argument, if there is to be as little as possible of reasoning in a vacuum. Such a book as Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* furnishes a plain example of greatness without popularity. It has chosen an entire civilization to be its province and has represented, interpreted, and distilled its civilization. The hills, wastes, oases, plants, and animals of that ancient country stand as clear in these pages as in the light which falls upon them. Here, too, are the ruins which mark the long past of the land, the roads by which men travel over it, the resting-places of caravans, the villages, and, along the borders of the desert, the old and the new cities. Moreover, this desert

is far from uninhabited. It is peopled with its own tribes, seen moving about their customary occupations, studied by the traveled not only in their outward costume and gesture, but in their folkways, mental processes, and language. What they do is traced naturally back to what their ancestors have done, and that explained as the outgrowth of immemorial conditions, of soil, climate, religion, social organization. Furthermore, the book is not a treatise merely. It is a poem, conceived on an ample scale, developed with abundant power, written in an idiom which had to be created for the purpose, an idiom at once rich, noble, stately, flexible, and exact. Every paragraph bears some mark of greatness in the writer. As only a great will could have survived these adventures, so only a great mind could have held all the materials of the book, and only a great character could have carried out the scheme without ever seriously flagging in passion, wisdom, or craftsmanship. Even to read it calls for a kind of athletic sympathy with greatness on the part of the reader.

Yet *Arabia Deserta* has hardly a single element of popularity. Few of those who have listened to excited rumor concerning it and have bought it, seem able to prove that they have read beyond a few harmonious pages. Arabia is so far away from England and America that not many imaginations have the curiosity to venture among the Bedouins. And the Arabia of Doughty is too Arabian for casual visitors. The mere details of topography and history and manners which he includes are enough to make amateur heads swim. What is worse for amateur sightseers, such as give books of travel their popularity, he takes it for granted that the Arabs have somehow a right to be Arabs, without apology. He does not forever confirm his readers in their own prejudices by knowing airs of superiority. He is no Briton shocked at the improprieties of nomadic life. He is no American contemptuous of a people ignorant of labor-saving devices. And he makes the least effort to catch the restless attention and hold it. He does not repeat, he does not emphasize, he does not sum up in easy conclusions, he does not indicate his course with convenient milestones. His language is a language of eternity, not a quick, lucid language of the sort which does all its work the moment it appears upon a page.

These distinctions can be made clearer by a second example.

Such a book as *The Americanization of Edward Bok* has almost all the elements of popularity and almost none of the elements of greatness. The scene, instead of lying in a strange distant region, among tribes of men incredible to readers who live upon the two sides of the Atlantic, lies close at hand. The closeness is by no means a mere matter of geography. If the scene lies close to the average American or European experience, the action lies even closer. It tells one of the two stories,—how a man wins a fortune, how a man wins a wife,—which surpass all other stories whatever in their appeal to the interest of mankind. Edward Bok in this narrative rises in the world as dramatically as the orphaned prince of a fairy tale. But he does not rise by the arts of magic, and so remain only an agreeable figure of romance. He makes his way by qualities no stranger,—to common doctrine if not to common practice,—than industry, sobriety, perseverance. His account of this march to wealth and reputation might serve as a conduct-book to any youth ambitious for a similar career. All is familiar ground. The hero is torn by no philosophic doubts, diverted by no wayward impulses, stayed in his course by no wild beauty, urged by no quirk in his constitution to do anything ecstatic or extravagant. At every triumph the ordinary reader is once again persuaded that the familiar principles of behavior are sound. Honesty is the best policy, and here is a man who is incorrigibly honest. The rotten apple spoils its companions, and here is a man who avoids all dubious associates. Money makes the mare go, and here is a man who drives his golden horses to the sun without a tumble. The average man who has followed this hero to his last page has had a romantic adventure which he can imagine without an effort; he closes the book comfortably assured that his average manner of life is both more interesting and more advantageous than any other. Finally, the language of the book is as satisfactory as its moral. It is brisk, perspicuous, adequate.

These are the qualities which make a book popular. The *Americanization* has few to make it great. Its scene and action both belong in a small world. That world, of course is more busy and more populous than the dry wilderness of *Arabia Deserta,* but greatness is not to be measured by quantity. To be great, a book must somehow exhibit or suggest a spacious world, with implications at least here or there of magnificent horizons. The

boundaries of Edward Bok's universe are snug and tidy. And the deeds of the hero are too unimpassioned to hold the rigorous attention of a profound or elevated mind. They seem, rather, like exercises in ingenuity. He who does them is not face to face with merciless nature or with dreadful doubt or with strong, subtle emotions. Rather, he is working out a puzzle, fitting not very mysterious parts together into a not very difficult pattern. With ingenuity a profound or elevated mind is seldom much concerned. Ingenuity belongs in games, of which the rules have already been laid down by other players. It is an old story, neatly told again. Edward Bok might have told an old story with such glints of irony or with such depths of poetry that the bones could get up and walk, fully clothed. But in his *Americanization* he is naïve and prosaic. His story has not been told in any of the languages of eternity, able to make him remembered as the hero of a book long after his physical existence is forgotten. This is the language of journalism, which reports but does not perpetuate.[1]

Exposition through Reasons.—In an interesting article, "How I Wrote *Within the Law*," Bayard Veiller explains how he came to introduce into his play the scene with the Maxim silencer:

The Maxim silencer business I put in because there was a great deal in the newspapers about the invention just at the time I was writing the piece. I think every play should be, as largely as possible, a reflex of what is in the papers at the present time—not only in lesser details such as this, but in larger affairs. When the silencer was publicly tested it was said that reporters in the next room had been unable to hear the sound of the shot. So I thought: "If reporters, why not policemen?" The introduction of the incident in the second act, when Joe Garson shows how effective the silencer is by shooting at a vase, was merely a matter of ordinary technical skill. You must let the audience see things like that for themselves: it is not sufficient to explain them.[2]

It has lately become known that during the World War a plan was matured at the German War Office for the

[1] "Greatness and Popularity in Literature," *The Forum*, March, 1927.

[2] *Metropolitan Magazine*, June, 1913.

complete destruction of London by means of a gigantic Zeppelin bombing raid. But the plan was never carried out. Captain Lehmann, in a volume called *The Zeppelins,* tells why. There were two reasons:

First, though we agreed that it could be done, none of us desired to be a party to it. At least a million women and children would be involved. London, with her noble buildings and treasures of art, was valuable to us as a precious possession of civilized humankind which we would not destroy without necessity. I never talked with any one who, realizing this, desired to take part in such a raid. The fact that some people were expecting it may be attributed to war hysteria. I do not believe that a sane person would have really wanted it to happen.

However, the plan could be authorized only by the highest command, which meant by the Kaiser himself. And he had never been officially consulted on it. From the first days of the war he had been strongly opposed to raids of any sort against England; and when, in the face of the constant pressure from his Admirals and Generals, he finally approved and authorized the first sporadic raids, it was with the understanding that only objectives of real military importance should be bombed.

He stipulated that such places as Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the residential sections should not be bombed, even by accident. I commanded the army Zeppelin which first flew over England and I know what the orders were and what they would have meant to me had I disobeyed them.

Our orders were specific; we were to avoid the prescribed districts, unless military exigencies made it imperative that some places should suffer damage. During the first winter of the war, whenever we had a conference on bombing, the outstanding impression was that the Kaiser was responsible for the instructions to bring our bombs back home if we were not sure of hitting objects of military importance.[1]

Interpretative Presentation.—Writing on the topic "Travelling Intelligently in America," Henry Seidel Canby comes to the subject of the influence of the earth's sur-

[1] *New York Times,* July 1, 1928.

face upon people. He uses Connecticut as an example, first presenting this state as a region of great variety, of scenery never grandiose and never mean, beautiful, though somewhat hard, then analytically interpreting the effects of this land upon its people:

Connecticut is a land of scrubby ranges, not high but broad, with sunny pastures, set among their crests, and valleys not deep but narrow. It is a country where wildness is never far away and open country always close at hand; a land of great variety, where the scale is small, the proportions excellent, the scenery never grandiose and never mean. There is always a range beyond the range to suggest infinity, but no peaks to set one dreaming; always the rocky frame of earth pushing through the soil to remind one of Connecticut and hard common sense.

In three hundred years civilization has done little or nothing to the ranges. They are as primitive as the English downs except that their pelt of forest has grown scrawny from too much fire and cutting. The rivers follow and seldom break through them, running north and south, though crookedly, while men in Connecticut since the earliest settlements have wanted to go east and west. Since they could not find "gaps," as in the softer, higher hills of Pennsylvania, nor go round, as in the broad, sleepy valleys of New York, they have cut over the ridges, piercing the woods to get to the open valleys.

It is therefore a State singularly adapted to the breeding of men, even as Iowa is perfect for the growing of corn and the Dakotas for wheat. As a breeder of men it has had no equal in North America. Most of them, to be sure, have left Connecticut! But that is natural. Either they stayed in the hill towns or the valleys —or they began crossing the ranges westward, and kept on.

It has been a breeder of men because it is a country of alternates, of centres of civilization made self-dependent by the no man's land of the hills rising beyond each populated valley. This made for isolation, isolation caused self-sufficiency, and out of self-sufficiency came the lovely Connecticut village which perfectly expressed its inhabitants—a capital in miniature, following the elms both ways along the street to the church, which was in its centre; looking

both ways under the elms to the boundary ranges. It was a village state, decorous, proportioned, complete, with its hinterland about it.

The essence of Connecticut is in the hill towns, of which Cornwall is typical, a community as self-sufficient as a rabbit-warren and once as energetic as a coal-mine. In its tiny fold of the Appalachians the first missionary school was founded and the Christianizing of China and the South Seas begun. Hawaii got its first white rulers here; this is where Indians were educated, and the first teaching of scientific agriculture attempted. Intellectual and spiritual impulses that universities and churches might envy took their rise in this little area. Cornwall Old Home Day begins with a panegyric like Pericles's Funeral Speech, where more dead heroes are celebrated than there are live voters in the town.

Natural selection, I suppose, did its part in sending to the borders of the Stockbridge Indians an unusually prepotent breed. But that is not all. The strong families in Cornwall stay strong; the poor whites have been poor whites since the settlement. It has been by geographical necessity a self-dependent community, where, in politics, finance, human relationships, religion, and education, each man had to take his part and could see from his own hill pasture the boundaries of the community where he was responsible. Connecticut towns like Cornwall saved the Constitution, giving the senatorial system to the United States, which was essentially a method by which a small population could keep its self-dependence in a continent.[1]

An effective method in interpretative presentation is to make one thing or experience of a class stand for the type. In the extract that follows, Conrad Aiken, upon the basis of certain experiences with ether and hasheesh, essays to give what he conceives to be the peculiar quality of the ether-dream.

Gigantic Dreams

What is it that gives to an ether-dream its peculiar quality, its peculiar difference from the ordinary dream? I suppose there is a simple enough physiological explanation; perhaps the Freudians

[1] *Scribner's*, August, 1926.

have had a shot at explaining its characteristic formations; but if there has been any *reductio ad absurdum* of it, whether physiological or psychological, I have not seen it. That the ether-dream does differ, essentially, from other dreams, anyone knows who has ever taken ether. It is, to the ordinary dream, what the epic is to the short story. It is gigantic; it is grandiose; it transcends the limits of time and space; it is cosmic; and when it is at its best, it gives to the dreamer an annihilating sense of understanding, a divine comprehensiveness of foreknowledge and memory. There is always one moment, in the ether-dream, when everything, the whole universe, becomes blindingly clear and simple. The sensation is, perhaps, a sensation of light—which makes one wonder whether the dream occurs usually as one is first returning to consciousness, first relaxing one's eyelids. And there is usually, also, a rather terrifying use of repetition. The pattern of the dream unfolds, and then returns upon itself and unfolds again. The movement, the drama, of the dream is as likely as not cyclic, and one draws from it an appalling sense of the everlasting determinism of things.

I have heard it said that hasheesh, also, gives one this sense of cosmic consciousness; but in that case my own two experiences with hasheesh could not have been wholly successful. On one of these occasions, I dreamed that the world was merely a colossal wall-paper design: a design of twined leaves and flowers, and all of it *moving*. It had no depth—it was flat, two-dimensional—and I myself, curiously without identity, was simply a part of this growing Vine, indistinguishable from it, and unrecognizable as a separate entity. There was, however, no sense of understanding in this dream, no sensation of light. The element of determinism was present, in the fixed and terrifying and inescapable movement of the vine; but there was no instant, as in the ether-dream, when everything became marvellously understandable.

Of my first ether-dream I remember very little—only, in fact, that it seemed to have been influenced by Lewis Carroll; for the world, in this vision, was a chess-board world, and all the moves in it were as pre-ordained as the moves of knights and bishops. My second dream was better, though it lacked the characteristic repetitiousness. In this dream I set sail with Columbus, as a sailor on the third of his caravels. The sensation of mere *voyage* was tremendous and timeless. It seemed to go on forever. And the fact

that it was ended, for me, by my falling overboard in mid-Atlantic, rendered all the more vivid this sense of its endlessness. I fell overboard, I was drowned, I sank to the bottom of the sea, I funnelled down on to the ocean-bed as a silver-threaded spiral of foam, I became an undistinguished oyster shell. There was a strong smell of oakum; I experienced a sensation of sadness and remoteness and lostness; a translucent brightness, as of a clear twilight, was around me. And it was at this instant that I suddenly understood everything. I looked up—for apparently, although I had become an oyster shell, I could still see—and saw the three keels far above me, like three small purple clouds moving across a sky. And I said to myself, half regretfully and half amusedly, "Good Lord, I won't be there when they discover America!" It was as I said this that I felt divinely omniscient. For I knew, vaguely, that America had been already discovered—had, in fact, been discovered four hundred years ago; but I also knew that it was not *yet* discovered. I had stepped clear out of time and space; my consciousness was both before and after the event; I had become God. I felt a kind of pity and contempt for poor Columbus, who knew so little; and for myself also I felt pity, because I knew so much. I knew everything that was in store for Columbus, and everything that would occur in America; it all unrolled before me in a single flash. But I felt, as well, with a last pang of my own dissolving identity, that I had myself lost a glorious opportunity. The world had been both found and lost, but all in my vatic imagination.[1]

Narrative presentation in itself often serves the ends of interpretation, or forms the basis for pointed interpretative comment. In the examples which follow, the purpose of the first is very plainly to interpret a character; yet the method is pure presentation. The writer trusts his reader to perceive all the desired implications without help. In the second case, the method is both that of presentation and interpretation. Here we have a story with a moral, the author feeling it necessary to point his tale, of which readers might not otherwise see the significance.

[1] *The New Republic,* June 27, 1928.

When Mr. Pecksniff and the two young ladies got into the heavy coach at the end of the lane, they found it empty, which was a great comfort; particularly as the outside was quite full and the passengers looked very frosty. For as Mr. Pecksniff justly observed—when he and his daughters had burrowed their feet deep in the straw, wrapped themselves to the chin, and pulled up both windows—it is always satisfactory to feel, in keen weather, that many other people are not as warm as you are. And this, he said, was quite natural, and a very beautiful arrangement; not confined to coaches, but extending itself into many social ramifications. "For" (he observed), "if every one were warm and well-fed, we should lose the satisfaction of admiring the fortitude with which certain conditions of men bear cold and hunger. And if we were no better off than anybody else, what would become of our sense of gratitude; which," said Mr. Pecksniff with tears in his eyes, as he shook his fist at a beggar who wanted to get up behind, "is one of the holiest feelings of our common nature."

—Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit.*

I was taking a meal once at a London restaurant—not one of the great eating places to which men most resort, but a small establishment on the same model in a quiet neighborhood—when there entered, and sat down at the next table, a young man of the working class, whose dress betokened holiday. A glance told me that he felt anything but at ease; his mind misgave him as he looked about the long room and at the table before him; and when the waiter came to offer him the card, he stared blankly in sheepish confusion. Some strange windfall, no doubt, had emboldened him to enter for the first time such a place as this, and now that he was here, he heartily wished himself out in the street again. However, aided by the waiter's suggestions, he gave an order for a beefsteak and vegetables. When the dish was served, the poor fellow simply could not make a start upon it; he was embarrassed by the display of knives and forks, by the arrangement of the dishes, by the sauce bottles and the cruet-stand; above all, no doubt, by the assembly of people not of his class, and the unwonted experience of being waited upon by a man with a long shirt-front. He grew red; he made the clumsiest and most futile efforts to transport the meat to his plate; food was there before him, but, like a very Tan-

talus, he was forbidden to enjoy it. Observing with all discretion, I at length saw him pull out his pocket handkerchief, spread it on the table, and, with a sudden effort, fork the meat off the dish into this receptacle. The waiter, aware by this time of the customer's difficulty, came up and spoke a word to him. Abashed into anger, the young man roughly asked what he had to pay. It ended in the waiter's bringing a newspaper, wherein he helped to wrap up meat and vegetables. Money was flung down, and the victim of a mistaken ambition hurriedly departed, to satisfy his hunger amid less unfamiliar surroundings.

It was a striking and unpleasant illustration of social differences. Could such a thing happen in any country but England? I doubt it. The sufferer was of decent appearance, and, with ordinary self-command, might have taken his meal in the restaurant like anyone else, quite unnoticed. But he belonged to a class which, among all classes in the world, is distinguished by native clownishness and by unpliability to novel circumstances. The English lower ranks had need be marked by certain peculiar virtues to atone for their deficiencies in other respects.

—Gissing, *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft.*

Parable, Fable, Allegory.—The parable, the fable, the allegory, and the moral tale are all forms of narrative used for expository purposes. Such methods are especially effective for the presentation of abstract or didactic ideas. There has never lived a greater teacher than Jesus, and "he spake not except in parables." Æsop and other writers of fables have exercised a world-wide influence in moral attitudes; Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* for generations the most read book in the western world next to the Bible, was an allegory; and the moral tale in the hands of thousands of able writers has always been an incalculable force in making clear the ethical conceptions upon which men base their conduct.

Originally *fable* meant merely talk, story-telling. Usually the story was of a marvelous nature, or had animal characters. Commonly it was told to enforce some moral truth, thus offering precept, or explaining an abstract

ethical notion in a pleasant and concrete form. From early childhood we have been familiar with the fable and with short religious allegory or parable. In the following modern example the form is used to make ridiculous the notion of free will!

Once upon a time there was a magnet, and in its close neighbourhood lived some steel filings. One day two or three little filings felt a sudden desire to go and visit the magnet, and they began to talk of what a pleasant thing it would be to do. Other filings near by overheard their conversation, and they, too, became infected with the same desire. Still others joined them, till at last all the filings began to discuss the matter, and more and more their vague desire grew into an impulse.

"Why not go to-day?" said some of them; but others were of opinion that it would be better to wait till to-morrow. Meanwhile, without their having noticed it, they had been involuntarily moving nearer to the magnet, which lay there quite still, apparently taking no heed of them. And so they went on discussing, all the time insensibly drawing nearer to their neighbour; and the more they talked, the more they felt the impulse growing stronger, till the more impatient ones declared that they would go that day, whatever the rest did. Some were heard to say that it was their duty to visit the magnet, and that they ought to have gone long ago. And, while they talked, they moved always nearer and nearer, without realizing that they had moved. Then, at last, the impatient ones prevailed, and, with one irresistible impulse, the whole body cried out, "There is no use waiting. We will go today. We will go now. We will go at once." And then in one unanimous mass they swept along, and in another moment were clinging fast to the magnet on every side. Then the magnet smiled—for the steel filings had no doubt at all but that they were paying that visit of their own free will.

—*The Romantic '90s.*

Abstract, Paraphrase, Translation.—The *abstract* is a condensation of a longer article which seeks to preserve both the content and style of the original. It is an expository type because its brevity brings the important

parts of the original in close proximity, making possible a quick comprehension of the whole. The maker of an abstract literally draws out the important from the less important ideas, and weaves them together. He takes phrases, whole sentences, bodily from the original and uses no quotation marks, for an abstract makes no pretense at originality. All that is required of the maker of an abstract is sufficient intelligence to pick out the essential. He usually retains the order of the original essay. All the material which the writer of the original used to illustrate and emphasize the bare framework of thought is omitted in the abstract. The method may be exemplified by using the first paragraph of Huxley's *On the Physical Basis of Life.*

> In order to make the title of this discourse generally intelligible, I have translated the term *"Protoplasm,"* which is the scientific name of the substance of which I am about to speak, by the words, *"the physical basis of life."* I suppose that to many, the idea that there is such a thing as a physical basis, or matter, of life may be novel—so widely spread is the conception of life as a something which works through matter, but is independent of it; and even those who are aware that matter and life are inseparably connected may not be prepared for the conclusion plainly suggested by the phrase, "the physical basis or matter of life," that there is some one kind of matter which *is common to all living beings,* and that their endless diversities are bound together by a physical, as well as an ideal, unity. In fact, when first apprehended, such a doctrine as this appears almost shocking to common sense.

The essential parts are italicized. Combining, we have

> Protoplasm, the physical basis of life, is common to all living beings.

When one takes notes on a lecture or on an article, he is making an abstract of the important elements. When the abstract is to be read by the writer only, he does not

of course trouble to get it into very good form, either as to sentences or paragraphs. Often, too, he paraphrases.

Encyclopedias are largely made up of abstracts, with the two related forms, summary and synopsis. Synopsis is a view in brief, usually of a story; summary is applied indifferently to all sorts of condensation. We may summarize a story or we may give the content of an article in concise form. The summary may or may not preserve the diction of the original. When one reads the article in *Britannica* on Descartes he finds a synopsis of the philosopher's life and a summary of his contribution to philosophy. Sometimes encyclopedias give abstracts of famous books.

Summary, synopsis, abstract, all have expository value because they enable the writer to get a comprehensive and rapid view of a body of knowledge. In this respect they resemble analytic (sentence) outlines. *Paraphrase*, on the other hand, is not aimed at brevity. A paraphrase may be longer than the original. Its purpose is to give the content of a passage or poem in words which are simpler and easier to understand than are the words of the original. Scientific words may be paraphrased into popular, archaic into present, learned into popular, or standard into slang. Paraphrase may restate the explicit meaning of the original in simpler words, it may bring out obscure implicit meanings, or it may render the original clear by straightening out involved syntax. It is, then, explanation, or interpretation, or both.

SHAKESPEARE'S SONNET—CXLVI

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
(Thrall to) these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?

Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
Buy terms divine by selling hours of dross;
Within be fed, without be rich no more:
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

This poem is difficult to understand because its language is archaic, because its syntax is involved, and because it is greatly condensed. The following prose paraphrase, while much less beautiful, makes the meaning clear.

Why does the soul, surrounded by its earthly body, permit that body, with its rebellious and vain desires for costly apparel, to enslave it; why does the soul suffer for lack of nourishment when it permits the body all luxury; is it not foolish to spend so much upon the body, when the soul can inhabit it only a short time? For soon the body must die and be consumed by worms, which are to inherit it.

Since this is all that is in store for the body, give it no more care. Let it instead become the servant of the soul; let it suffer that the soul may profit. Hours that before were given to short-lived physical pleasures may then be turned to profit in strengthening and purifying the soul. Though the body be poor, the enriched soul shall be ready for immortality. So the soul, having triumphed over the body, will have triumphed over the death which claims the body, and will be immortal.

Translation is but another form of paraphrase, the translator working in two languages instead of in two levels of one language. Because it makes intelligible what before was unintelligible or obscure, it may be called exposition.

Just as there are no exact synonyms in English, so there are no exact equivalents in the words of two different languages. Even common nouns have overtones of meaning, connotative value, in one language, which are not present

in another. Words and combinations of words have sound values which are totally lost in translation. Finally, idiom is untranslatable. All of this makes translation very difficult. A metaphrase, or literal translation, usually has no literary value whatever, partly because idiom is destroyed, and partly because the rhythm and sound value of the original are lost. The best that the translator can do is to get as deeply into the mood of the original as possible, and to try to produce his translation in that spirit.

Criticism.—Much of our writing and talking is an attempt to settle questions of value. Is a thing important? Why is it important? How significant is it? What are its peculiar merits, and its peculiar faults?

Attempts to determine value or significance have for their subjects everything that comes within man's experience. We cannot help trying to evaluate everything the day brings forth: the breakfast coffee, the new paving on our street, the newspaper, the professor in our nine-o'clock class, the postman, the football coach, *The Red Badge of Courage*. Judging of values is the most important thing we have to do, our success and happiness depending upon our ability to distinguish between the good, bad, and indifferent. For criticism concerns itself not only with the province of "taste" or "culture," but with the practical as well. Our entire educational system has for its purpose the development of standards for evaluating the factors of life. Criticism is a matter of comparisons. Our whole mental life is a process of analyzing, classifying, defining, —of comparing things with other things. In a way all of this is criticism, or antecedent to it.

Criticism concerns itself quite as much with the new president or the new minister as it does with the newest book. The following extract is an example of practical criticism:

Education and Business

Sometime ago I read in the daily papers the news of an interesting statistical survey among the graduates of a noted university. The report showed that the earnings of the graduates who were members of the Phi Beta Kappa Society were considerably less than those of most of the other graduates. The papers drew what to them seemed the clear moral of the tale: it is a mistake to concentrate on the things of the mind while in college. Was this really the moral? The reply suggests itself that the Phi Beta Kappa men had been successful in the light of what they had sought in education, which was a knowledge not of how to make money, but of how to make something of themselves. Is the function of college to equip the young for a specific occupation or for life? Many students incline towards the former of the two alternatives, and while in college choose their courses accordingly; if they intend to enter business, they concentrate on courses in economics; if medicine, they study chemistry and biology, and so forth. And these same youths, when well on their way to a business or professional career, find that, once through with their work, they have nothing to fall back upon; they have formed no habits of reading, and cannot keep their minds long enough on an open book; they lack any cultural interests with which to refresh the mind, and so resort to the "movies" or the radio to fill their spare time; and, what is more important still, they have constructed no general philosophy of life with which to face the world and see their own occupation in its proper perspective. So, gradually their work engulfs them; whether in or out of the office, their minds are never off its problems, till business ceasing to be mere business becomes life itself.

. . . . . .

College is a preparation for life, and life is infinitely wider than work. Life is also leisure and thought and family relationships; it is play and art and religion; it is sleep and waking and death itself. Not only is life wider than work, it is the only thing that justifies work. If you absorb life into work, you find that there is nothing to work for. Work must always lead beyond itself to a life of the mind by which the fruits of work may be enjoyed. To work is to make a tool of oneself; and man should be not only a tool, but also the craftsman behind the tool. All too often, the calls of

actions are so insistent that one has no time for the repose and thoughtfulness that enter into the building up of an inner life; one comes to live altogether outside oneself. And here is the opportunity of education. Colleges should fill, to some extent, the rôle of the medieval monasteries in which man may take an inventory of his vital resources, away from the bustle of the world, and determine his place in the general scheme of things. It is impossible to complete this task in college, but it is possible to begin it. Education should be the process of forming a personality which may function in the world of work and yet be out of it, of cultivating those intellectual and spiritual interests by reference to which only has work or life any importance.[1]

It has been popularly supposed that criticism is a synonym for fault-finding. Even Hazlitt leaned toward the opinion that the critic's business was to point out faults and abuses so that they might be remedied; virtues were self-evident and would speak for themselves. Others, like Matthew Arnold, have held that it was the business of criticism to point out and to propagate "the best that has been known and thought in the world." Both points of view have some truth. The competent critic should, by virtue of having greater insight and learning than the ordinary reader, be able to see more than the ordinary reader, and make the work more significant for him. Because of his superior knowledge he ought, too, to be better able to point out shortcomings. He should, then, do both.

But judgments of value, of course, imply a standard, a basis of judgment. If I say the breakfast coffee is good, or the newspaper is "one of the six best in the country," or the professor "hasn't much in his head," the statements imply comparisons with other things or people who have made a better or worse impression,—or with an average or norm. Education and experience tend to set up standards of judgment. Extravagant expectations are leveled

[1] Raphael Demos, *The Yale Review,* July, 1926, pp. 725-726.

down to averages: One learns after a while about what to expect from professors and newspapers; from restaurant coffee; from the movies; from the popular novel.

But here we encounter a psychological puzzle. Ten persons can stand as close together as possible and look at a landscape or at a picture; but because of differences in the acuteness of their senses, and because of the great differences in their internal adjustments, nerve patterns, previous experience and, hence, associations, no two people will see the same thing. From this it is argued that anything which any of these people may say is valid for the speaker only. His judgment will be a personal one. There is no use trying to judge according to standards, because absolute standards are psychologically impossible. That is why one critic lauds a book while another critic damns it.

In the matter of food we admit there is no standard possible. One says the coffee is good; another says it is bitter; one says it is too hot; another, that it is just right. In the popular saying, we admit "there is no use arguing about taste." When one has stated that lobster is distasteful, we do not try to persuade him that it is delicious. Why argue, then, that Renoir is a great painter when our friend says he sees nothing in him; or that Dreiser is a great novelist when our friend says his awkward sentences are intolerable?

Those who hold this personal, subjective, impressionistic, or romantic point of view, as it is variously called, might be expected to make no critical comments on anything—to hold their tongues. But that would not be natural. When one finds the coffee good he expresses his delight, even gives you some inkling of just what sort his delight is; and the knowledge that he is pleased, as well as your vicarious sipping of his good coffee, gives you delight. Your pleasure justifies his speaking or writing. If his experience is complex—as when he looks at the Mona Lisa, or hears Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, or

reads *Prometheus Unbound*—perhaps he will have wonderful sensations which he can communicate in a most interesting and profitable way. He does not presume to make absolute judgments upon the work of art. He will enhance or lessen its value merely by telling you how it affected him. You may or may not be able to follow him, because people are all unique and because language is imperfect and uncertain in its effect, but he will try to impart the richness of his experience to you. "Gentlemen," says Anatole France, "I am going to talk about myself on the subject of Shakespeare, or Racine, or Pascal, or Goethe—subjects that offer me a beautiful opportunity." The good critic is he "who relates the adventures of his soul among masterpieces."

> There is no such thing as objective criticism any more than there is objective art, and all who flatter themselves that they put aught but themselves into their work are dupes of the most fallacious illusion. The truth is that one never gets out of oneself. That is one of our greatest miseries. What would we not give to see, if but for a minute, the sky and the earth with the many-facetted eye of a fly, or to understand nature with the rude and simple brain of an ape? But just that is forbidden us. We cannot, like Tiresias, be men and remember having been women. We are locked into our persons as into a lasting prison. The best we can do, it seems to me, is gracefully to recognize this terrible situation and to admit that we speak of ourselves every time that we have not the strength to be silent.
>
> —*The Adventures of the Soul.*

The critic must be aware, says France, that every book exists in as many forms as it has readers. These books become part of one; their kindly influence inspires wise discourse, speech grave and familiar, "wavering images like garlands constantly broken and constantly reknotted," curious memories, forgetfulness of cares, and at last a return to one's own soul. The function of criticism, as he sees it, is to portray as faithfully and concretely as one

can, what goes on in the mind when a piece of literature is read or a work of art observed. But there is another kind of criticism, illustrated in this extract from a personal letter:

> I have finished *Richard Feverel*. I kept constantly telling myself that this novelist is a poet, and when I came to the chapter called "An Enchantress," I felt that the XIXth Century was ever so far ahead of the Elizabethans. Suddenly I remembered that these were both *your* ideas. Indeed the man affects me terribly. I quite see why, in spite of his being one of our greatest novelists, he is not read. The sense of pain produced by R[ichard] F[everel] is intense. My mind ached at passages. I was stifled and had to stop reading. Even Balzac does not so affect me; for Balzac is more scientific on the one side and more *in* his subject on the other. What is terrible about G[eorge] M[eredith] is that he feels it as a poet and stands apart from it as an ironic showman. There is a great want of truth, verisimilitude rather, about some of the characters. I do not realize Sir Austin or indeed Richard except as a Picture.
>
> —*Letters and Papers of John Addington Symonds.*

Here we encounter the objective sort of criticism. It is true that the writer of this rather incoherent excerpt is in part subjective—telling how Meredith's novel affected him. He *feels* that Meredith is a poet: "My mind ached at passages. I was stifled." But he proceeds to comparisons: Balzac does not so affect him. Balzac is more scientific; yet more *in* his subject. There is in Meredith a great want of truth, of verisimilitude. There is here appeal to standards; the writer is basing his judgment on something outside of himself.

The great search in criticism is for valid objective standards. For however we may despair of the possibility of objective art, the same for everyone who looks or listens, and however we may despair of absolute truth either from sense impression or reasoning processes, the fact remains that there are approximations to truth which for ordinary purposes are sufficiently constant. We may not agree

about our coffee; people affect us differently; we may or may not like a certain painting; but there are all sorts of things about which most of us do agree fairly well.

Given normal physical equipment, and we are, or can become, fairly accurate about judging shades of color, pitch and timbre of sounds, and similar æsthetic stimuli. We have fairly stable ideas of ethics, manners, and fashions. We all have some sense of rhythm, of euphony, and of design or form. We all, through experience and reading, learn a useful, even if superficial, psychology: we have common-sense notions of how people act under various situations. By a process of reasoning we can surmise how new factors in the situation will affect them. By reading the best, seeing the best, hearing the best, we develop notions of excellence in all of the arts. Wide experience corrects poor native taste, raises our standards, and yet breeds tolerance.

Most of us have an unconquerable desire to know the best in the world, which will not permit us to retire into ourselves. It is only the extreme skeptic, one who distrusts everything except what is in consciousness at the present moment, who will resign himself entirely to the subjective attitude. The rest of us, less philosophic perhaps, and likely to blunder frequently, will compare and pass judgments which we think are valid. Wider experience may cause us to change or even reverse our former judgments, but we shall not let that dismay us, consistency being for our minds no hobgoblin.

Critics have concerned themselves with such propositions as the following, and have evaluated works of art accordingly:

I. As to aim:

1. Works of art should teach; hence the artist must attach himself to that which is lofty and ennobling.

2. Works of art should delight; art has no purpose except to give pleasure to the beholder. By giving him pleasure it may educate his emotions and refine his taste. There is also a compromise position between the two.

II. As to method:

1. Art should be a reflection of life; it must be true to life; a copy of reality,—holding a mirror up to nature. This is the attitude of the realists and naturalists. Anything in life is a fit subject for art.

2. Art is superior to life. The artist's imagination is much superior to his eye. The Greek statues representing athletes are more perfect than any athlete who ever lived; a painting or etching is much superior to a photograph.

The critic also has devised various methods by which to approach his subject:

I. The historical:

A work may be studied in relation to previous or succeeding works of similar nature. The ideas, language, technique may be compared with or related to the history of those ideas, that language, or that technique. We place an artist in the *milieu* which produced him and show just how he fits into a large movement. Thus we might study Chaucer in relation to the beginnings of the Renaissance; to the politics, religion, and language of the fourteenth century. We might study Burne-Jones as a part of the pre-Raphaelite movement; Wordsworth in relation to the decline of Neo-Classicism and the beginning of the Romantic Revival.

II. The biographical:

We may study the works of a man as a result of the peculiar heredity and experience of the man. In the last few years this method has become psychologi-

cal or psycho-analytic. Discoveries of new facts in the lives of the poets, and the psychology of Jung, Freud, Adler, and others, have led to important new studies in the works of such men as Wordsworth, Poe, and Wagner.

III. The technical:

This is largely concerned with method, with the success or nonsuccess of the artist in using his symbols; it attempts to explain, interpret, and evaluate art in the light of the laws of color, sound, rhythm, and other elements of form.

These three types, historical, biographical or psychophysical, and technical, are, of course, objective methods. But no critic binds himself to any one type. Neither does he scruple to put in, wherever he thinks it pertinent, a bit of purely subjective reaction. There is usually no attempt to stick to a "pure" type.

It must also be apparent that "criticism," while it is an effort at unbiased evalution, is an inclusive sort of term. Explanation and interpretation are usually prerequisite to any act of judging. Indeed, it must have occurred to the reader that the personal, subjective type of criticism advocated by Anatole France and other skeptics, is more appreciative and interpretative than it is judicial.

The critic, whether of the personal, subjective type or not, is often required to state in simpler terms the explicit meaning of the work; he more often has to relate the implicit meaning of a work, *i.e.,* interpret it. These tasks, as we said, are usually preliminary to evaluating a work. They require an attitude of sympathy on the part of the critic. He must not only be impartial as the civil judge, but must be willing to enter sympathetically into the ideas and moods of the work with which he is dealing.

The critic must be open-minded and hospitable to the new; he must not assume an air of omniscience. He may

expose what seem to him to be faults and blemishes, but if too high-handed he may easily make himself ridiculous. An influential editor a century ago said of Wordsworth's poetry, "This will never do," and yet it has done,—so well that we now laugh at the critic.

In addition to the questions which exposition of all sorts tries to answer, the critic, especially the objective critic, should propound to himself these questions when he considers a piece of work:

What was the author trying to do?
Has he done it—well or ill?
Was it worth doing, and why?

The first question demands of the critic a sympathetic attitude, a willingness to enter into the point of view of the author or artist or practical man of affairs who created the work under consideration. If one cannot put himself into this frame of mind, he had better leave the job to someone else. The other two questions are dependent upon the first and will call into play all the learning, experience, taste, and good sense which the critic can command.

EXERCISES IN MIXED FORMS

1. Examine several of Æsop's *Fables*. What is the underlying moral idea of each? What are the advantages secured through his method of making the idea clear?

2. Make in 250 words an abstract of Huxley's *On the Physical Basis of Life*, or Mill's *The Subjection of Women*.

3. From your lecture notes make an abstract of a lecture on English history, or geography, or botany, or zoölogy.

4. Read "What, Then, Is Culture?" by Katherine Fullerton Gerould, in *Harper's* for January, 1927. Make an abstract of it in 200 words.

5. Make a synopsis of Galsworthy's *The Silver Box*, including only the essentials of the action.

6. Paraphrase the following:

Swinburne: "The Garden of Love"

Shelley: "Ozymandias"
Wordsworth: "Character of the Happy Warrior"
"London, 1802"
Milton: "On His Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-Three"
Arnold: "Dover Beach"

7. In Browning's works read "De Gustibus," "The Lost Leader," "My Last Duchess," or any poem that is interesting because of its ideas; then look up the paraphrase and interpretative comment on the poem in Bardoe, *The Browning Cyclopædia.*

8. Write a definitive essay distinguishing between fable, parable, allegory, and symbol.

9. Outline this chapter, criticizing the division.

10. Make a metaphrase, then a translation, of a 200-word passage in any foreign language text which you are now reading.

11. A student who had taken gas in a dentist's chair wrote an account of what went on in his mind during the experience. This was made to stand as an explanation of what it is like to take gas. What experience have you had where unusual things happened in your mind? Tell about it. Reread in this connection Conrad Aiken's description of his ether-dream, pages 480-482.

12. Is there some one you particularly dislike? Analyze your reasons, and write them out in as clear a form as you can.

13. Likewise, is there any one among your friends or acquaintances whom you have grown to pity? Write out your reasons.

14. Do you believe that there is a connection between climate, or other geographical features, and the temper and achievements of a people? If you do, present a case and interpret it for us.

15. (a) Present the actions and speech of a person in such a way as to leave with the reader an unmistakable interpretation of character. (b) Relate an incident, and "point the tale" with a conclusion. (See Gissing's anecdote, pages 483, 484.)

16. Explain through the method of illustration some attitude or belief you hold.

EXERCISES IN CRITICISM

1. Analyze the following critical extracts. What has the writer set out to do in each case? Does he interpret meaning? Or

merely state effects without analysis? Or analyze effects and the methods used to secure these effects? Does he judge? If so, what is his standard for judgment? Is he chiefly interested in æsthetic reactions or technical excellence?

. . . Certainly, I must confess my own barbarousness, I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet is it sung but by some blind crowder, with no rougher voice than rude style; which, being so evil apparelled in the dust and cobwebs of that uncivil age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindar?

—Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry.*

When I returned to my shoemaker's house for dinner, I could scarcely believe my eyes; for I seemed to see before me a picture of Ostade's, so perfect that it needed only to be hung in the gallery. The position of the objects, the light, the shadow, the brownish tint of the whole, the magical harmony, everything that one admires in those pictures, I saw here in reality. It was the first time that I recognized with such clearness the faculty which I afterwards exercised with more consciousness, namely, that of seeing nature with the eyes of this or that artist, whose works I had just studied with particular attention. This faculty has afforded me much enjoyment, but has also increased the desire to devote myself eagerly from time to time to the exercise of a talent which nature seemed to have denied me.

—Goethe, *Poetry and Truth.*

To talk of Rodin's sympathetic vision, his sensitiveness to light, his perception of the unity of action in the body is all beside the mark if one fails to enjoy in Rodin the craftsman, who loved his material, and moulded it to his will. "Sculpture is the art of the hole and the lump," as Rodin bluntly puts it. Working with marble or with bronze, he evokes from them a wealth of effects.

In textures his sculpture presents a varied surface of

broad smooth planes catching luscious high lights, contrasting with soft roughly-grained areas trembling in half tone, these again giving way to recesses of softened shadow from which glints of subdued light glow. The material is not disguised, but its capacity for enchanting the eye is thoroughly exploited.

—Louis Weinberg, *The Art of Rodin.*

There are many characters in *Anna Karénina*—too many, if we look in it for a work of art in which the action shall be vigorously one, and to that one action everything shall converge. There are two main actions extending throughout the book, and we keep passing from one of them to the other—from the affairs of Anna and Wronsky to the affairs of Kitty and Levine. People appear in connection with these two main actions whose appearance and proceedings do not in the least contribute to develop them; incidents are multiplied which we expect are to lead to something important, but which do not. What, for instance, does the episode of Kitty's friend, Warinka, and Levine's brother, Serge Ivanitch, their inclination for one another and its failure to come to anything, contribute to the development of either the character or the fortunes of Kitty and Levine? What does the incident of Levine's long delay in getting to church to be married, a delay which, as we read it, seems to have significance, really import? It turns out to import absolutely nothing, and to be introduced solely to give the author the pleasure of telling us that all Levine's shirts had been packed up.

But the truth is, we are not to take *Anna Karénina* as a work of art; we are to take it as a piece of life. A piece of life it is. The author has not invented and combined it, he has seen it; it has all happened before his inward eye, and it was in this wise that it happened. Levine's shirts were packed up, and he was late for his wedding in consequence; Warinka and Serge Ivanitch met at Levine's country-house and went out walking together; Serge was very near proposing, but did not. The author saw it all

happening so—saw it, and therefore relates it; and what his novel in this way loses in art, it gains in reality.

—MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Criticism of Anna Karénina.*

Now therein of all sciences (I speak still of human, and according to the humane conceits) is our poet the monarch. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the first give you a cluster of grapes, that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well enchanting skill of music; and with a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner.

—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY, *An Apology for Poetry.*

It is a restful chapter in any book of Cooper's when somebody doesn't step on a dry twig and alarm all the reds and whites for two hundred yards around. Every time a Cooper person is in peril, and absolute silence is worth four dollars a minute, he is sure to step on a dry twig. There may be a hundred handier things to step on, but that wouldn't satisfy Cooper. Cooper requires him to turn out and find a dry twig; and if he can't do it, to go and borrow one. In fact the Leather Stocking Series ought to have been called the Broken Twig Series.

—MARK TWAIN.

The "Ring and the Book" improves. The 2nd Vol. is infinitely best. What you say about the Preface spoiling one for the rest—just as you taste some nasty things all through the good wines and meats that succeed in a banquet—is so true that I had the greatest difficulty in trying to do my duty of faithfully appreciating the volume.

Balzac is always superior even in his tediousness because, as you observe, he gives a foretaste and aroma of feeling—a suspicion (*e.g.*, at the beginning of the *Cousine Bette*) of impending tragedy or a perfume (as in Beatrice) of sentiments to be disclosed. But his mere accumulative, anatomical method—his habit of laying deep and broad foundations of brick and rubble for crystal pyramids of frozen fire to stand upon—in that I thought he resembled Browning. With Balzac the fire of the pyramid often heats the bricks even red hot, so that they glow and become scarcely distinguishable from the divine superstructure.

—J. A. Symonds, *Letters and Papers.*

I turn now to a little book of his written in the middle of his life, at the height of his power, just before he entered on his second career of social philosopher and new evangelist. *The Harbours of England* was published nearly forty years ago in 1856 (*ætat.* 37), and it has now been happily reprinted in a cheap and smaller form, 1895. It is, I believe, as an education in art, as true, and as masterly as anything Ruskin ever wrote. But I wish now to treat it only from the point of view of English literature. And I make bold to say that no book in our language shows more varied resources over prose-writing, or an English more pure, more vigorous, more enchanting. It contains hardly any of those tirades with which the preacher loves to drench his hearers—torrents from the fountains of his ecstasy, or his indignation. The book is full of enthusiasm and of poetry: but it also contains a body of critical and expository matter—simple, lucid, graceful, incisive as anything ever set down by the hand of John Ruskin, or indeed of any other master of our English prose.

Every one remembers the striking sentence with which it opens—a sentence, it may be, exaggerated in meaning, but how melodious, how impressive—"Of all things, living or lifeless [note the five l, the four i, in the first six words], upon this strange earth, there is but one which, having reached the mid-term of appointed human endurance on it, I still regard with unmitigated amazement."

This object is the bow of a Boat,—"the blunt head of a common, bluff, undecked sea-boat lying aside in its furrow of beach sand. . . ."

"The sum of Navigation is in that. You may magnify it or decorate it as you will: you will not add to the wonder of it. Lengthen it into hatchet-like edge of iron,—strengthen it with complex tracery of ribs of oak,—carve it and gild it till a column of light moves beneath it on the sea,—you have made no more of it than it was at first. That rude simplicity of bent plank, that [*? should be 'which'*] can breast its way through the death that is in the deep sea, has in it the soul of shipping. Beyond this, we may have more work, more men, more money; we cannot have more miracle."

The whole passage is loaded with imagery, with fancy, but hardly with conceits; it is wonderfully ingenious, impressive, suggestive, so that a boat is never quite the same thing to any one who has read this passage in early life. The ever-changing curves of the boat recall "the image of a sea-shell." "Every plank is a Fate, and has men's lives wreathed in the knots of it." This bow of the boat is "the gift of another world." Without it, we should be "chained to our rocks." The very nails that fasten the planks are "the rivets of the fellowship of the world." "Their iron does more than draw lightning out of heaven, it leads love round the earth." It is possible to call this fantastic, over-wrought, lyrical: it is not possible to dispute its beauty, charm, and enthusiasm. It seems to me to carry imaginative prose exactly to that limit which to pass would cease to be fitting in prose; to carry fancy to the very verge of that which, if less sincere, less true, less pathetic, would justly be regarded as Euphuistic conceit.

And so this splendid hymn to the sea-boat rolls on to that piece which I take to be as fine and as true as anything ever said about the sea, even by our sea poets, Byron or Shelley:—

"Then, also, it is wonderful on account of the greatness of the enemy that it does battle with. To lift dead

weight; to overcome length of languid space; to multiply or systematize a given force; this we may see done by the bar, or beam, or wheel, without wonder. But to war with that living fury of waters, to bare its breast, moment after moment, against the unwearied enmity of ocean,—the subtle, fitful, implacable smiting of the black waves, provoking each other on, endlessly, all the infinite march of the Atlantic rolling on behind them to their help, and still to strike them back into a wreath of smoke and futile foam, and win its way against them, and keep its charge of life from them;—does any other soulless thing do as much as this?"

This noble paragraph has truth, originality, music, majesty, with that imitative power of sound which is usually thought to be possible only in poetry, and is very rarely successful even in poetry. Homer has often caught echoes of the sea in his majestic hexameters; Byron and Shelley occasionally recall it; as does Tennyson in its milder moods and calm rest. But I know no other English prose but this which, literally and nobly describing the look of a wild sea, suggests in the very rhythm of its cadence, and in the music of its roar, the tumultuous surging of the surf—"To war with that living fury of waters" —"the subtle, fitful, implacable smiting of the black waves,"—"still to strike them back into a wreath of smoke and futile foam, and win its way against them." Here we seem not only to see before our eyes, but to hear with our ears, the crash of a stout boat plunging through a choppy sea off our southern coasts.[1]

There was nothing new or startling, nothing subtle or impressive, in the opinions that Macaulay held, or in the body of his thought. In the hands of an ordinary writer these opinions and this thought would have been commonplace. Macaulay makes them striking by the art with which he enforces them. The problem of style was for him a problem solely of expression, not of thought. He

[1] FREDERIC HARRISON, from "Ruskin as Master of Prose," *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill and Other Literary Estimates.*

is never struggling to express himself—that is easily done; all his effort is to impress others. To this end he elaborates a masterly rhetoric.

—Sir Walter Raleigh, *On Writing and Writers.*

If we deny to Macaulay (as I should be inclined to deny to him) a place among our greatest prose writers, it is not because he lacks great gifts, but because for a prose writer, whether essayist or historian, one gift is greater than all the rest. The gift of imagination, as even his admirers confess, was "not his strongest point."

It is important to define this, for Macaulay's imagination is certainly pictorial and vivid to a very remarkable degree. But it is not creative imagination; it has not the fusing and compelling power which imposes unity on every subject that it handles. Such an imagination does not collect details to decorate a given framework; it melts its material into a single whole. Macaulay had not this imagination. His minute and tenacious memory was against him, by presenting him with plentiful material, ready-made. His love of picture and movement was against him, by causing him to be satisfied with glitter and effectiveness even where they obscure the true significance of the theme. And it would not be difficult, I think, to show that his most admired and glowing sketches do not glow with life.

—*Ibid.*

Does not this extract furnish a good explanation and summary of the causes and limitations of Macaulay's influence? To those who are already deeply interested in the matters that he describes he has never appealed with any force. He is too fluent and superficial. They have never cared for him, and they never will. But the newcomer to a subject, who is glad to have his attention awakened now by this touch of interest, now by that, here by an anecdote, there by an ingenious comparison, all in a manner so clear and easy that even the idlest listener is compelled to understand, will find Macaulay a match-

less guide among the tombs of dead writers and statesmen. And not a few, perhaps, who dissent from Macaulay's conclusions in any of his themes would have to confess that it was Macaulay himself who first roused them to take an interest in that theme and stimulated them to the labours which have enabled them to supplement or to refute him.

—*Ibid.*

2. Each of the two extracts given below enunciates principles for the judging of works of art. Have you principles—standards—which guide you in your study of art or literature? Set down a list of the things you must find in a painting, a poem, or a novel—or a piece of music or a sculptured figure—before you can like it.

I have sometimes remarked in the presence of great works of art, and just now especially, in Dresden, how much a certain property contributes to the effect which gives life to the figures, and to the life an irresistible truth. This property is the hitting, in all the figures we draw, the right centre of gravity. I mean, the placing the figures firm upon their feet, making the hands grasp, and fastening the eyes on the spot where they should look. Even lifeless figures, as vessels and stools—let them be drawn ever so correctly—lose all effect so soon as they lack the resting upon their centre of gravity, and have a certain swimming and oscillating appearance. The Raphael, in the Dresden gallery (the only greatly affecting picture which I have seen), is the quietest and most passionless piece you can imagine, a couple of saints who worship the Virgin and Child. Nevertheless, it awakens a deeper impression than the contortions of ten crucified martyrs. For, besides all the resistless beauty of form, it possesses in the highest degree the property of the perpendicularity of all the figures.[1]

I remember, when in my younger days, I had heard of the wonders of Italian painting. I fancied the great

[1] The Duke of Weimar, quoted by Emerson in *Prudence*.

pictures would be great strangers; some surprising combination of colour and form; a foreign wonder, barbaric pearl and gold, like the spontoons and standards of the militia, which play such pranks in the eyes and imaginations of schoolboys. I was to see and acquire I knew not what. When I came at last to Rome, and saw with eyes the pictures, I found that genius left to novices the gay and fantastic and ostentatious, and itself pierced directly to the simple and true; that it was familiar and sincere; that it was the old, eternal fact I had met already in so many forms—unto which I lived; that it was the plain *you and me* I knew so well—had left at home in so many conversations. I had had the same experience already in a church at Naples. There I saw that nothing was changed with me but the place, and said to myself—"Thou foolish child, hast thou come out hither, over four thousand miles of salt water, to find that which was perfect to thee there at home?"—that fact I saw again in the Academmia at Naples, in the chambers of sculpture, and yet again when I came to Rome, and to the paintings of Raphael, Angelo, Sacchi, Titian, and Leonardo da Vinci. "What, old mole! workest thou in the earth so fast?" It had travelled by my side: that which I fancied I had left in Boston was here in the Vatican, and again at Milan, and at Paris, and made all travelling ridiculous as a treadmill. I now require this of all pictures, that they domesticate me, not that they dazzle me. Pictures must not be too picturesque. Nothing astonishes men so much as common-sense and plain dealing. All great actions have been simple, and all great pictures are.

—EMERSON, *Essay on Art.*

3. Write a criticism of some educational, religious, political, social, or commercial practice that you feel to be illogical or wrong.

4. Interpret and defend some practice in any of the fields mentioned in the last exercise, which has been attacked, but which you feel to be right.

5. Read the most talked-of novel of the moment. Analyze the

reasons for its great popularity, and estimate its probable permanency of appeal.

6. Write an estimate of your own writing and make a statement of what you would like to achieve in whatever field of authorship you are most interested.

7. Take a book which you like, briefly state what its substance is, characterize its author's way of writing, and set down in the simplest terms you can employ what the significance of the book is, both in terms of its meaning and in terms of its actual and probable influence.

8. Criticize frankly, but entirely without willingness to "say things" for the purpose of startling anybody, the last play you attended.

9. Write an appreciation of the concert you last attended;—do this sincerely, from your immediate and your reflective impressions, whether or not you "know anything about music."

10. If you were to choose a picture with which you were to live your entire life, what one would it be, and why?

11. Study a current book review for method. Has the writer set out to find the purpose of the author of the book? Does he judge it according to this purpose? Or does he judge it at all? What elements of mere personal impression do you find in the review? Of personal prejudice? Use one of the following periodicals for your purpose: *The Bookman, The Saturday Review of Literature, Books, The New Republic, The Nation, The London Times, New York Times.*

12. Write a criticism of the last moving picture you have seen.

13. Reread Gissing's interpretation of Mrs. Gamp in the preceding section. Then write an interpretation of some character in fiction or drama you have found interesting.

14. In *The Forum* for June, 1928, Mr. O'Brien gives a list of the fifteen best short stories of the world. Find this list. What do you think of Mr. O'Brien's selections? Would you make any substitutions?

15. Read any one of the following stories and write an interpretation of its meaning: Andreyev's *Lazarus,* Chekov's *The Black Monk,* Katherine Mansfield's *The Fly.*

16. Write an interpretation of one of the following plays: Ibsen's

The Wild Duck; Bennett and Knoblock's *Milestones;* Pirandello's *Henry IV;* Hervieu's *The Red Robe;* Galsworthy's *Strife.*

17. Read Mark Twain's *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* with a view to discovering to what extent the circumstances and events of the author's boyhood days affected him in the writing of this very mature book.

18. Compare the book mentioned in 17 with Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan.*

19. Read a critical essay by each of the following authors: John Drinkwater, J. Middleton Murry, Paul Elmer More, H. S. Canby, Edgar Allan Poe, James Russell Lowell, and one or two others chosen by yourself. Then compare and contrast the methods of these authors.

GENERAL EXERCISES IN EXPOSITION

1. Write an essay based on the following extract in which you either—

a. Interpret the character of the husband.

b. Present the thoughts of the wife as the husband rattled on over his boiled beef and onions.

c. Analyze what goes on—

(1) In the mind of the wife as she looks at the pencil sketches of herself.

(2) In the mind of the husband as he contemplates these same sketches.

The Husband of Mme. Bovary

Charles finished by rising in his own esteem for possessing such a wife. He showed with pride in the sitting-room two small pencil sketches by her that he had had framed in very large frames, and hung up against the wall paper by long green cords. People returning from mass saw him at his door in his wool-work slippers.

He came home late,—at ten o'clock, at midnight sometimes. Then he asked for something to eat, and as the servant had gone to bed, Emma waited on him. He took off his coat to dine more at his ease. He told her, one

after the other, the people he had met, the villages where he had been, the prescriptions he had written, and, well-pleased with himself, he finished the remainder of the boiled beef and onions, picked pieces off the cheese, munched an apple, emptied his water bottle, and then went to bed, and lay on his back and snored.

—FLAUBERT.

2. Write a character portrait of the man who said this:

I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day in the week. . . . In its proper column I might mark by a little black spot every fault I found upon examination to have committed respecting that virtue upon that day. I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively.

3. Interpret the character of the man of whom de Maupassant could write:

Luckily, he had never (oh! never) been obliged to doubt that excellent opinion of himself, which he liked to express thus, in his moments of rhetorical expansion:

"My whole life gives me the right to shake hands with myself."

4. From the evidence contained in the following quotation from *The Egoist,* present Mrs. Mountstuart as you would conceive her to be. Suppose you were to begin your essay with "I know a Mrs. Mountstuart . . . ," could you go on with it? If you have trouble with Mrs. Mountstuart, try giving us the man—Sir Willoughby Patterne.

Rich, handsome, courteous, generous, lord of the Hall, the feast and the dance, he excited his guests to a holiday of flattery. And, says Mrs. Mountstuart, while grand phrases were mouthing round about him: "You see, he has a leg." (Meredith)

5. In the extract given below, Goethe describes his first visit, as an impressionable young man, to the Dresden art gallery. What "first" experiences have you had that made similar deep impressions? Write an interpretive sketch of some one of these.

> The hour when the gallery was to open, which I had awaited with impatience, arrived. I entered this sanctum, and my astonishment surpassed all previous conception. This salon, memorable in itself, in which splendour and cleanliness reigned together with the deepest stillness, the dazzling frames, all nearer to the time in which they had been gilded, the polished floor, the rooms entered by spectators more frequently than by copyists,—all imparted a feeling of solemnity, unique of its kind, which resembled the sensation with which one enters a church, all the more as the adornments of so many a temple, the objects of so much adoration, were to be seen set up here, solely for the sacred purposes of art. I put up with the cursory description of my guide; only I requested that I might be allowed to remain in the outer gallery. Here, to my delight, I felt myself completely at home. I had already seen the works of several of the artists, others I knew from engravings, others by name. I did not conceal my knowledge, and thus inspired my guide with some confidence; as a matter of fact, the rapture which I expressed at pieces in which the brush had gained the victory over nature, delighted him; for these were the works which principally attracted me, where the comparison with nature as we know it must necessarily enhance the value of art.
>
> —*Poetry and Truth.*

6. Just what is your present state of belief on any of the following questions? Analyze this belief, and present it, without argument for or against, as clearly as you can.

> Prohibition, The Quota System for Regulating Immigration, The Tariff, Recognition of Russia, The League of Nations, Capital Punishment, High-speed Auto Roads, Athletics for All, Football for Women, Final Examina-

tions, The Lecture Method, Simplification of Clothing for Men, Brighter Clothes for Men, Better Food, Less Food, Exercise and Disease.

7. Explain some game you play with such clarity and completeness that a group of people who had never seen the game might use your explanation in learning it.

8. Have you lived in places or traveled where people have ways of doing things which other members of your class might be interested in hearing about? If so, try presenting some typical custom or process in a clear, interesting manner. It may be wise to put your presentation in the form of narrative or description.

9. (a) Can you, through an illustration, make clear the truth or falsity of this statement: "The absurd man is the one who never changes his mind."? (b) Try through illustration to show what Emerson meant when he said, "Consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds."

10. French boys are asked to write on Chateaubriand's theory, "It is very proper and very useful to understand, to study, to read living foreign languages, rather dangerous to speak them, and extremely dangerous to write them." What do you think of this theory? Explain in particular what Chateaubriand means by his last statements about the danger of writing and speaking foreign languages.

11. Read Herman Melville's account of taking oil from the head of a whale, in his *Moby Dick,* Chapter LXXVIII.

12. Present a process by means of the narrative method. (One student, making a piece of coal speak for itself, told the story of coal from its beginning to delivery in a bin; another took himself through the process of registration in his university; another traced a newspaper story through, from the "row" in East Chicago to the reader and the wastebasket.)

13. Reread Trader Horn's account of the Akowa Bushmen in the rôle of actors in a native Conjo, page 453. Can you show through the narrative method how some ceremony or entertainment is carried on? (Perhaps you have seen an Irish wake, an Indian Snake Dance, a western Rodeo. If not, try something less unusual—a wedding ceremony or a funeral.)

14. Look up Matthew Arnold's definition of *Philistine.* Bring

to class a condensed statement of this definition. Do the same for Arnold's definition of the *Grand Style.*

What does Arnold mean by *Sweetness?* (See his *Sweetness and Light.*)

15. Study the following extract. What method does the writer use? Try defining two terms by the method of comparison and contrast.

> . . . Science seems always to advance, while philosophy seems always to lose ground. Yet this is only because philosophy accepts the hard and hazardous task of dealing with problems not yet open to the methods of science—problems like good and evil, beauty and ugliness, order and freedom, life and death; so soon as a field of inquiry yields knowledge susceptible of exact formulation it is called science. Every science begins as philosophy and ends as art; it arises in hypothesis and flows into achievement. Philosophy is a hypothetical interpretation of the unknown (as in metaphysics), or of the inexactly known (as in ethics or political philosophy); it is the front trench in the siege of truth. Science is the captured territory; and behind it are those secure regions in which knowledge and art build our imperfect and marvelous world. Philosophy seems to stand still, perplexed; but only because she leaves the fruits of victory to her daughters the sciences, and herself passes on, divinely discontent, to the uncertain and unexplored.
>
> Shall we be more technical? Science is analytical description, philosophy is synthetic interpretation. Science wishes to resolve the whole into parts, the organism into organs, the obscure into the known. It does not inquire into the values and ideal possibilities of things, nor into their total and final significance; it is content to show their present actuality and operation, it narrows its gaze resolutely to the nature and process of things as they are. The scientist is as impartial as Nature in Turgenev's poem: he is as interested in the leg of a flea as in the creative throes of a genius. But the philosopher is not content to describe a fact; he wishes to ascertain its relation to experience in general, and thereby to get at its meaning and its worth; he combines things in interpretive synthesis; he

tries to put together, better than before, that great universe-watch which the inquisitive scientist has analytically taken apart. Science tells us how to heal and when to kill; it reduces the death rate in retail and then kills us wholesale in war; but only wisdom—desire coördinated in the light of all experience—can tell us when to heal and when to kill. To observe processes and to construct means is science; to criticize and coördinate ends is philosophy; and because in these days our means and instruments have multiplied beyond our interpretation and synthesis of ideals and ends, our life is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing. For a fact is nothing except in relation to desire; it is not complete except in relation to a purpose and a whole. Science without philosophy, facts without perspective and valuation, cannot save us from havoc and despair. Science gives us knowledge, but only philosophy can give us wisdom.

—DURANT, *The Story of Philosophy.*

Chapter XII

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

I

The Nature of Argument

ARGUMENT has for its end to convince or persuade. There is a great deal of argument among us. One of the interesting phenomena of the human mind seems to be an inherent tendency among men who think and feel strongly on any subject, whether in religion, politics, and philosophy, or in exercise and diet, to want others to believe as they do; and likewise striking is the large number of individuals the world over, who, impelled by motives of altruism, self-interest, or what not, are zealously engaged in trying to persuade others to do something: to buy or sell something,—automobiles, real estate, tin tacks,—to go somewhere in some certain way, to vote for someone or something, to quit drinking or to begin drinking, to smoke Lucky Strikes or not to smoke at all, to eat yeast, to join a church, or a lodge, or the Red Cross, to take a correspondence course, to subscribe to the Book-of-the-Month Club, to support the League of Nations, to boost the home town.

Indeed, until he begins to observe and reflect upon his observation, the average man would scarcely believe how much of his thinking and expression is argumentative. He can scarcely read his daily paper without taking sides on some issue raised, thence, according to the set and thor-

oughness of his mental habits, to argue the matter through. If a second person is present this argument probably finds expression either in tentative exchanges of opinion, or in spirited debate, with presentation of reasons and evidence. Through the platform and press just such arguments, crystallized and systematized, are extended to public attention. So debate goes on the world over: gently, privately, and informally, as in a discussion over the coffee cups of the latest play or novel, or the probable effects of Lindbergh's flight; heatedly and publicly and formally as in editorial and Congressional debate on taxation, prohibition, and Mississippi Flood Control, or in tract and magazine controversy on matters of education and religion.

And besides all this, a large volume of argument, not usually listed as such, occurs in the various literary forms —the novel and the drama, the essay, the biography, and the short story, even in poetry. Often argument presented in this way is powerful in its appeal and startling in effect. This is in part due to the potential emotional force of narrative or dramatic representation.

Altogether, there is probably too much argument going on everywhere; certainly there is too much of the wrong kind, the kind which centers upon idle subjects, or is carried on from wrong points of view, which is based upon misinformation or prejudice, or follows illogical courses of thinking. Undesirable types of argument are usually due to lack of an educated understanding of what constitutes good argument. If this chapter is to be of any use to students who wish to argue in an educated way, it should point out the qualities and the methods of valid and desirable, as opposed to false and weak, argument.

Sound argument, like other products of the human mind, can never be fully analyzed, but, so far as it lends itself to analysis at all, the facts about it can be expressed in a very brief space.

Facts.—Facts, common sense, and logical thinking form the basis for good argument. To these must be added potentially vivid emotional reactions, sympathy with people, and an understanding of life.

In order to be convinced, the human mind must be made to see, and nothing so helps it to see as to know. "Mankind," declared Aristotle, "have a tolerable natural tendency toward that which is true." The strength of valid argument lies in the perennial appeal of truth and the natural operation of the human intellect in response to truth; its materials are straightforward, undiluted facts, its processes the skillful presentation of these facts in logical chains of reasoning marching steadily on to inevitable conclusion.

This, of course, is an ideal which denies, alike, fellowship with the blandishments of the promoter of fake oil stock and the empty assertions of the uninformed sophomore. It discards the advertising of worthless products, or that which is socially or economically unsound, and it has no place for cheap and self-interested political or other propaganda. But it is, nevertheless, the only theory of argument that is worthy of study and practice. It is a theory which recognizes that it is a grave thing to tamper with another man's belief or to influence him unduly in his conduct. It assumes that the ultimate good of man must lie in his ability to grasp and make use of what is true. And may it be said here that heavy responsibilities rest with the college man as a potential leader in finding ways to conserve the best in our civilization and in learning secure principles of adaptation through which our cumulatively massive economic and social structure may become a friend, not an enemy, to man. Otherwise, destruction may result. There is no place in the preparation for future leadership in America for training in trivial pettifoggery and demagoguery; only that leadership can succeed which earnestly engages itself to know and propa-

gate the best in social and economic and political principle, the truest in physical and spiritual living. In the last analysis—and the theory of argument we have been talking about derives its validity from this important fact—sound knowledge is the only safe basis for wise decision. Words truly profound were those of the great teacher, and more applicable today if possible than when they were first spoken, "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

But, says the prospective young lawyer, I want to win cases, not to make the world safe nor to make it free; but *ought* cases be won except on the basis of the facts? Our entire system of civil and criminal law is designed to the end of just decisions growing out of the best obtainable evidence; and the dignity and integrity of our legal institutions depend upon the realization of that ideal. Likewise, in the social, political, religious, or educational fields.

Here then, always assuming perfect sincerity and honesty of intention, is the first rule for successful argument: Get the facts in the case; suspend conclusion until the last scrap of available pertinent information has been obtained. This is more than a mere ideal: it has been the practice of successful men through the ages. Cicero many years ago wrote, "But finally to bring the orator whom we are forming to actual cases . . . we will teach him first—laugh if you will—to know them thoroughly and deeply." Then he adds significantly,—is his acute criticism still applicable?—"This is not taught in school; for the cases assigned to boys are easy." After pointing out how many men fail in the courts through inadequate knowledge, Cicero cites his own practice in contrast:

> For my part, I take pains to learn the case from the client himself, alone, that he may talk more freely; and to debate against him, that he may defend himself and advance whatever arguments he has thought out.

Cicero insisted on the facts: no secondhand, vicarious knowledge would do; he went straight to his client and learned his case thoroughly. It is always difficult to combat argument based on that kind of information.

To the detractors of the artist Turner, Ruskin had answers drawn from long and intimate acquaintance. And when he had finished, Turner's less well-informed opponents were left with not a leg to stand on. His method was the simple and time-honored one of presentation of fact through the narration of illustrative incident. (See page 552 for Ruskin's argument.)

Senator Owens, some time after the Great War, distrusting the facile charges that Germany alone was responsible for the cataclysm that had involved most of the civilized world, set out to discover the facts. He went to the sources and unearthed evidence to show that, whatever blame could be heaped upon the Central Powers, Russia and a few leaders in France were apparently the culpable parties. Mr. Owens' data, gathered from official letter files and expense accounts, showed secret agreements between Russia and French diplomats designed to bring about coöperation in weakening Germany and enriching themselves; showed, moreover, the expenditure of enormous sums of money to influence the French press to support their schemes. The result was an education of the French people and of the world in general in hatred and distrust of Germany.

If Senator Owens is right, he has done the world a service in the interests of truth and justice by revealing the facts; but whether he is right or wrong, his attitude and methods in making his study are to be approved. He refused to close his mind on an important matter until he had ascertained the facts, and he set out, painstakingly, systematically, to get them.

Logic.—To Aristotle, the business of rhetoric was to persuade, a function we have now limited more specifically

to argument. And rhetoric as an instrument of persuasion, Aristotle held, "is the counterpart of logic." The *enthymeme,* "a sort of syllogism," insists Aristotle, "has the most sovereign effect of all the means of persuasion." What the syllogism is to logic, says Aristotle, the enthymeme is to rhetoric, and he recommends for the speaker who would learn to persuade, a careful study both of the syllogism of logic and the enthymeme of argument. Without going into whatever subtle distinction Aristotle meant to make between enthymeme and syllogism, it is entirely instructive to note the reason for his insistence upon a knowledge of syllogism and enthymeme and the subject matter of each for him who would learn the art of argument: "Because it belongs to the same faculty of mind to recognize both truth and the semblance of truth," are his words. By the "same faculty of the mind," we understand the great Greek thinker to mean the logical faculty; and we readily agree that it is indeed the function of the logical faculty to recognize both truth and the semblance of truth. Clear-sighted in this as in so many other matters, Aristotle plainly discerned that facts are useful only to the discriminative, logical mind, which can pick the true from the false and, discarding the useless and irrelevant, link together into chains of effective reasoning ideas that stand in cause and effect or other valid relationships.

In emphasizing the syllogism and the enthymeme, Aristotle, no doubt, set upon them their true value, thinking of them not as substitutes for reasoning, nor yet as especial aids in the reasoning process, but rather as tests for valid thinking. The syllogism especially is an excellent device for making a picture, as it were, of a chain of reasoning, so that one can see before him in something like chart form the steps through which his mind has gone in reaching a conclusion. Under such conditions fallacies are comparatively easy to detect. The enthymeme, being an abridged syllogism, is likewise a help in this respect.

The syllogism exists in many forms, but in its simplicity it consists of three definitely related statements: the major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. If the major premise is true and the minor premise is true, the conclusion derived from these two premises must also be true. The syllogism can best be understood by reference to an example. Thus:

Major premise: All monkeys are mammals.
Minor premise: This animal is a monkey.
∴ This animal is a mammal.

The *enthymeme* is an abridged syllogism. It consists of two members of the syllogism in various possible combinations, the third statement being inferred. Thus:

This animal is a mammal, for all monkeys are mammals.

or

This animal is a mammal, for it is a monkey.

or

All monkeys are mammals; therefore this animal is a mammal.

or

This animal is a monkey; therefore it is a mammal.

It will be readily seen that while we may originally think a thing out in syllogistic fashion, we usually express the results of our reasoning in the enthymeme. It may be that it was this fact which led Aristotle to emphasize the enthymeme in forms of discourse aimed to persuade. But whatever Aristotle had in mind, it is entirely necessary to take thought as to the reasoning which the statement in enthymeme represents. It is a curious fact that nearly all our ordinary reasoned observations occur in something like this form. This is true of both *a priori* and *a posteriori* reasoning.

A priori reasoning is based on evidence before the fact. A certain situation exists which experience has taught us to connect with a certain result; that is, we here reason from cause to effect. Thus we say, "It is going to storm, for the barometer has fallen, there are already clouds in the sky, and the wind is rising." Likewise we might declare, "That man will turn out a criminal; he has an evil look in his eye."

A posteriori reasoning, on the other hand, begins with effect and proceeds to cause, or it begins with the facts and proceeds to principles. Thus a doctor examines a patient and declares, "This man has typhoid fever; he has been drinking polluted water, or eating infected food." Or one may say, "This man must have committed some crime, for his eyes are evil and he acts like a hunted animal."

In any case, of course, such statements can be true only when the reasoning behind them is true; and the advantage of a clear statement in enthymeme form is that it may be easily subjected to examination and thus tested for its truth. A test of loose reasoning is inability to complete the enthymeme, or completion with some makeshift or illogical statement. When pressed for a reason, many children and sometimes grown people can only say "because." *Because* never logically completes an enthymeme: "I hate him, because . . ." means that one hates for no reason whatever, at least for no formulated reason. But even more hopeless logic is the type expressed in many a facilely-worded declaration, where the reason assigned is entirely irrelevant or is based purely upon ignorance or prejudice. In his *The Disabled Soldier,* Goldsmith has given us a delightfully accurate illustration of this frailty in mental processes among untutored folk whose minds never get beyond preconception and prejudice in a search for reasons. Trained in English traditions of implacable

hostility toward the French, Goldsmith's old soldier declares, "I hate the French because they are all slaves and wear wooden shoes." Were they slaves, and did they all wear wooden shoes? And if they did, was that a reason for hatred? Facts and their application alike the old soldier gaily disregards. Sufficient to his purpose is the show of reasoning. And he does not always require even that, as Goldsmith shows a moment later when he makes the soldier assert, "Though we had no arms, one Englishman is able to beat five Frenchmen at any time."

The educated mind shows itself to be truly educated only when it can give reasons, true analogies, and logical causes and effects.

> Logic [says Will Durant] means, simply, the art and method of correct thinking. It is the *logy* or method of every science, of every discipline and every art; and even music harbors it. It is a science because to a considerable extent the processes of correct thinking can be reduced to rules like physics and geometry, and taught to any normal mind: it is an art because by practice it gives to thought, at last, that unconscious and immediate accuracy which guides the fingers of a pianist over his instrument to effortless harmonies. Nothing is so dull as logic; nothing is so important.
>
> —*The Story of Philosophy.*

Important as logic may be in other departments of life, in the science and art of argument it is indispensable: in accepting Mr. Durant's whole statement here and making it applicable to the business of convincing and persuading, one is tempted to make only one modification. In argument, logic is not a dull thing; it is really very lively and interesting. If you do not believe it, try turning logician for a time and see what fun it is to chase fallacies, hoary-whiskered and newly-sprouted ones alike, into the sunlight of exact truth.

II

The Construction of an Argument

The wrong way to build an argument is to form a conclusion and then look for facts and reasons to support this conclusion. The right way, of course, is first to get the facts, then to study and analyze them, pondering over them and reasoning from them, until in the light of one's most complete knowledge and best thinking a valid conclusion is reached. The final step is the organization and the expression of the argument in the clearest, most cogent form possible.

The successful analysis of a subject for debate involves several important processes, among the most important of which are definition of terms, definition of the issue or issues involved, isolation of relevant from irrelevant matter, and close reasoning on the basis of known and pertinent facts. Let us take up each of these points in order.

Definition of Terms.—Clear definition of terms is corollary to clear thinking. The logical mind instinctively wants to know what is being talked about. Every one knows that half the dissension in the world grows out of failure of people to understand each other. Even international issues are sometimes settled on the basis of differences in definition, as when the majority of American voters, called upon for a decision on Article Ten in the League of Nations Covenant some years ago, accepted the interpretation proposed by its opponents, rather than one based on the actual reading of the text itself, and the one obviously intended by the framers of the covenant.

Plato was among the first of the great rhetoricians to emphasize definition. When a subject for discussion is proposed, the first thing to do, insisted Plato, is to bring together under one idea all the widely scattered particu-

lars connected with it, "in order that by a precise definition, we may make every one understand what it is we are intending to discuss." In this simple statement is to be found the practice of those who have been great in argument.

Lincoln's *Cooper Institute Address* furnishes an excellent example of such practice. This address as a whole is one of the finest examples of argumentative composition the world has produced. And it is nowhere better than in the simple, direct frontal approach to the subject through a clear definition of the terms and the issues involved:

Mr. President and Fellow-citizens of New York: The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty, it will be in the mode of presenting the facts, and the inferences and observations following that presentation. In his speech last autumn at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in the *New York Times,* Senator Douglas said:

> Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well, and even better, than we do now.

I fully endorse this, and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and an agreed starting-point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the inquiry: What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?

What is the frame of government under which we live? The answer must be, "The Constitution of the United States." That Constitution consists of the original, framed in 1787, and under which the present government first went into operation, and twelve subsequently framed amendments, the first ten of which were framed in 1789.

Who were our fathers that framed the Constitution? I suppose the "thirty-nine" who signed the original instrument may be fairly called our fathers who framed that part of the present government. It is almost exactly true to say they framed it, and it is

altogether true to say they fairly represented the opinion and sentiment of the whole nation at that time. Their names, being familiar to nearly all, and accessible to quite all, need not now be repeated.

I take these "thirty-nine," for the present, as being "our fathers who framed the government under which we live."

—*Speeches and Addresses.*

The Issue.—There can be no intelligent argument until the issue at stake has been isolated and defined. If two football teams were to line up facing different ways, but not opposite each other, thus:

each with its own ball, and then proceed to play past each other without meeting, we should have a fair representation of what occurs when two contending parties to an argument fail to meet on the common ground of definition and issue. An argument must turn upon the issue involved. If the question arises, Should student-driven cars be prohibited? one wants at once to know upon what ground the argument for prohibition is made.

We may be told that it is proposed as a safety measure for the protection of student life and limb. The issue at once becomes, "Do student-owned cars result in an unreasonable number of accidents?"

Or we may learn that cars are to be banned on the ground that they interfere with study. The issue now becomes, "Do students who own and operate cars study less and receive relatively lower grades than those who do not? and (2) Do such students interfere with the scholarship of other students?"

It is possible, of course, that prohibition of cars might

be proposed for both of these reasons, or for any number of other reasons; the issues would automatically vary with the causes suggested and any facts or evidence presented must, if logical, bear directly upon the issue involved.

Lincoln's *Cooper Union Address* again supplies an admirable example. Here the definition leads directly into the issue:

> What is the question which, according to the text, those fathers understood just as well, and even better, than we do now?
>
> It is this: Does the proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the Constitution, forbid our Federal Government to control as to slavery in our Federal Territories?
>
> Upon this, Senator Douglas holds the affirmative, and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue; and this issue—this question—is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood "better than we." Let us now inquire whether the "thirty-nine," or any of them, ever acted upon this question; and if they did, how they acted upon it—how they expressed that better understanding.

Having thus clearly defined the question and drawn the issue, Lincoln bends the whole force of logical reason and persuasive fact to uphold his side of the question. He does this through an orderly presentation of indisputable evidence to show that the acts and votes of the "fathers who framed the Constitution" refute the argument of his opponent Douglas, and are in agreement with his own interpretation.

Facts as Direct Evidence.—Perhaps the strongest proof that can be offered in establishing the truth of a contention is direct statistical evidence. And wherever this kind of evidence is obtainable, thoughtful people will always demand it, and take little account of assertions not so supported. There is, obviously, no escape from verified facts and figures. If a railroad company is shown that at a certain partially concealed crossing there have been

twenty fatalities in one year, while at a better-marked crossing on the same road no accidents have occurred, it is hard to escape the conclusion that something is wrong and that some precautionary measure should be taken to guard lives at this point. Likewise, a statistical report showing that illiteracy is decreasing in the Philippines, that a distinctly higher standard of living is being maintained, and that by actual census, 90 per cent of the population show themselves contented with American rule, could be taken as proof that American government there is on the whole satisfactory.

Concrete historical data is often convincing answer to prevailing misconceptions. Thus the student who used the single illustration of the Thirty Years' War in Germany to show that, in comparison with the size of the populations involved, our own Great War was far from the most disastrous in history, quite proved his point when he gave evidence demonstrating that in the thirty-year period covered by this terrible war, industry, including agriculture, was completely destroyed, cities were razed to the ground, family life was broken up, the very religion over which the contending parties fought was suppressed, and the population decreased from 27,000,000 to 5,000,000. Even France did not suffer like this in the late war.

In his lecture on *The Leadership of Educated Men*,[1] George William Curtis appeals to history for support in his contention that the world must look to its educated men for wise leadership. Those who declare the educated class to be made up of cowards, laggards, and bigots are judging it by its failures, declares Curtis. The facts are that the great progressive movements of the modern world have been led, and the great crises met, by scholars. And he proceeds to a roll call of the names of scholarly men connected with significant events of the last four cen-

[1] Delivered before the alumni of Brown University, June 20, 1882.

turies. The list is impressive; few can read this argument for educated leaders, supported as it is by concrete examples drawn from a wide range of history, without thorough conviction.

It is true, of course, that there are few controversies and causes upon which there are not two sides, with a possibility for much contradictory evidence. In such cases the evidence on each side must be carefully examined with a view to determining its relative worth. Not all evidence is of equal value, so it is not always the gross amount, but the significance, of data that counts most in helping the investigator to a decision.

Fact and Presumption.—In law courts every trial begins on the presumption that a man is innocent until he is proved guilty. But many men are convicted who are never really proved guilty, by the establishment of a strong presumption of guilt.

Thus, though no direct evidence can be produced, it is found that the accused had left town on a certain day, with a man later found murdered. It is found also that the automobile, which belonged to the dead man, had been sold by the accused; later, a pawned watch and a ring are likewise traced to the accused. It is also proved that he has in the past shown vicious traits of character. He, however, having concocted a story of attack by a third party, of an interest in the property of the dead man which entitled him to the car and jewelry, stubbornly refuses to admit his guilt; and since the gun used in the killing cannot be found and there is no witness to the deed, there is no direct evidence of guilt. But the presumption of guilt, adduced by circumstantial evidence, is so strong that no doubt is left in the minds of the jury, and the vote is for conviction.

In an article in *The Forum*[1] Thomas Edison discusses the questions of religion and immortality. As a scientist

[1] "Has Man an Immortal Soul?" Nov., 1926.

he admits that we may lack direct proof as to the truth of religious beliefs, but the presumption for such truth is strong—the very persistence and power of Christianity lends validity to the presumption:

Codes That Have Dominated Humanity

As the basis of religion, safe and sound and sure, we have the teaching of a few men with great minds whom we call prophets and whose leadership of thought has been of incalculable value to the world. That humanity instinctively has appreciated their importance and the value of that which they have taught, is indicated by the permanence of their influence. That of any of the four, Christ, Buddha, Confucius, or Mohammed, has been far and away greater than the influence of any material scientist yet produced in the world's history. Collectively they have dominated civilization.

That the teachings of these leaders have maintained this powerful influence through the generations and the centuries is proof enough that they contain some truth. Only truth can live thus. The teachings of Christ have shown a greater vitality than any other, for they are accepted annually to-day by more new minds than any others, in spite of the fact that those who have attempted to interpret them for other people,—and have announced themselves competent to do so by calling themselves theologians, and becoming heads of churches,—have disagreed more widely and more bitterly with regard to what is Truth than the leading interpreters of any of the other teachers.

The triumph of Christianity over those who have called themselves infidels or skeptics is as nothing in comparison with its triumph over those who have called themselves Christians. Scandals, divisions, heresies, and the birth of new theorizers with new theories seem unable even to weaken Christianity, considered as an abstract, illuminating idea, and as an inspiring ideal. Such performances as have marked the procedure of self-denominated Christians if applied to anything else this world ever has produced would have destroyed it, but absurd, cruel, dishonest as many of the creeds have been, they have been unable to destroy Christianity.

I believe Christianity will continue to produce the world's best leadership; the Christian nations are the wisest nations and one proof of their wisdom is their acceptance of Christianity; therefore it seems to be the fact that I am a full subscriber to the moral code of Christ, as to all true moral codes.

Testimony is a form of direct evidence. In law the testimony of an eye-witness—assuming that his probity and general reliability have not been successfully attacked—is of the greatest importance. The word of the man who has been on the scene, or is otherwise in a position to know facts first-hand, is bound to prove convincing. Similarly, the testimony of informed persons in disputes involving property rights, corporate regulations, questions of precedent, and so forth, often carries much weight.

Appeal to Authority.—Complete arguments are sometimes built on the word of authorities. There was a time when works of literature were judged on the basis of their conformity to Aristotle's *Poetics*. The deference to authority and precedent in legal procedure is too well known to need comment; it is, incidentally, one of the disgraces of the legal profession. Individuals become authorities in various ways. After years of scholarly study, Ambassador Bryce produces a splendid two-volume exposition of American government, from a background of a lifetime of thought and research. Taussig writes a great book on economics, Parrington a similarly fine work on American literature—each becomes a recognized authority in his field, and is quoted as such the world over. Through quite different processes, Commander Peary became an authority on Arctic travel and Arctic problems at large, Colonel Lindbergh has reached a position where his advice is sought on every sort of private or national matter relating to aëronautics, and Florenz Ziegfeld has become an arbiter who is asked to give decisions in disputes on

current tastes in chorus girls and to pass judgment on all the new books having to do with feminine beauty.

The word of each of these men is, of course, of great value, and can be used with effect in *bolstering* pertinent argument. But it must not be forgotten that all such authorities are liable to human error. Napoleon was a soldier of a genius almost more than human, yet even his testimony in military matters could not always be trusted; no one can read Emil Ludwig's biography of Napoleon without realizing that he made tragic blunders.

Analogy.—Reasoning from analogy involves an indirect application of fact:—A system of liquor control has been successful in Norway and Sweden; the same system adopted in America would prove a solution to our prohibition problem. In his *Conciliation* speech, Burke reasoned from analogy in his appeal for lenient treatment of the American colonies. Wales, Chester, and Ireland, he showed, had been rebellious and unmanageable as long as they were subjected to repression; there had been a time, for instance, when no Englishman could get six yards off the highway in Wales without certain murder. But when England reversed her policy from one of repression to liberalism, all this changed: Wales, Chester, and Ireland became loyal, peaceable units of the nation. Would not a tolerant attitude toward the American colonies produce like happy results?

In the article by Edison mentioned in the previous section there is an interesting argument by analogy:

> But the theory of Soul immortality is not necessarily shocking to developed intelligence of the sort which men call practical. We know that actual life, as we define life, can persist and in certain instances has persisted for a period as long as 4000 years, and still persists. That doesn't mean immortality, but 4000 years is more than 3900 years farther toward immortality than human life ever gets except in very rare, freak instances. And we now are sure the

sequoia trees of California have lived forty centuries and still live and thrive.

If the life of the sequoia can extend itself thus into the centuries shall we put a limit on it, saying when those redwood trees must die? And if that life can live on thus, with the suggestion of indefinite existence, why not other life, for instance, that of the human being, in one manifestation or the other, physical or mental,—the latter term being used in this instance as including spiritual.

Of course there is an answer to the question as to why the redwood trees have shown such pertinacity of life in that particular environment where their existence has been so successfully maintained, when other environments have shown no such life-persistence. It is because that particular environment has proved to be peculiarly adapted to the well-being of the sequoia, and conversely the sequoia especially fits this particular environment. The reason for the great longevity of this forest species is that in that region there has been perfect balance between the redwood tree and all or nearly all surrounding conditions. Is it reasonable to say, if we admit this (as we must), that even physical human life might not be very much extended in similarly favorable circumstances of balance to environment?

And if, as is and from the dawn of history has been the belief, the Mind of man (or call it Soul, if you prefer) is wholly separate from the body of man and does not die with it, may it not continue to exist, in an environment with which it balances, indefinitely? That would be immortality. But as to how it lives, or in what form, and as to what the more favorable environment may be, whether that of this world or some other, I cannot say.

In an argument for the correction of alleged errors in current histories of the University of Michigan, an alumnus argues from analogy:

More might be said; but it seems unnecessary. It has been demonstrated by the legislative acts of the Governor and Judges of the Territory of Michigan, and of the Legislature of Michigan, by the Acts of Congress and by the decisions of the Supreme Court of Michigan, that the University of Michigan was founded in 1817. Why the claim for 1837 is persisted in in the face of the records

and the decisions of the Supreme Court to the contrary, is not understood.

When Rev. John Harvard died in 1636 he bequeathed £780 and 300 books for teaching generally. In 1639 the school was opened and the name of Harvard College adopted. It was not until 1650 that a charter was granted; yet Harvard rightly claims to have been founded in 1636. In 1647 New Haven "set aside college land"; but it was not until 1668 that the Hopkins Grammar School was established. The charter was not granted until 1702 and it was not until 1718 that the first building was completed through the generosity of Elihu Yale and the name of Yale College adopted. Yet Yale rightly claims to have been founded in 1668. In 1746 a charter was granted to a "college" in New Jersey. On September 14, 1747, a second charter was granted to the "Trustees of the College of New Jersey" which was its official and only title until 1896, when the name was changed to the "Trustees of Princeton University." The school was first opened at Elizabeth, New Jersey, in 1746, but two years later it was moved to New Brunswick. In May, 1752, the school was moved to Princeton. It was not until September, 1754, that the cornerstone was laid. In November, 1755, the first sermon was preached and instruction begun. Yet Princeton rightly claims to have been founded in 1746. In view of these precedents, how can any objection be properly made to 1817, as the date of the founding of the University of Michigan?

There is another phase of this subject, which merits discussion. The Regents of the University of Michigan each year, in its certificates of graduation, makes use of the words: "In the year of the State of Michigan the .....;" this year the ninetieth, based upon the erroneous assumption that Michigan became a State in 1837. The records prove this to be an error and the Supreme Court of Michigan has decided that it is an error. Michigan became a State on November 3rd, 1835—not 1837. On that day the Legislature assembled; on that day the whole machinery of the State went into operation. The laws, adopted by the Legislature, prior to 1837, were declared by the Supreme Court to be valid and in force. Whatever may be said as to the founding of the University, there is and can be no justification for the assertion that this year (1927) is the ninetieth year of the State of

Michigan; it is the ninety-second. Why the Regents persist in this in the face of the decisions of the Supreme Court to the contrary, is not understood.

It is submitted that these errors (and others) in the history of the State and University of Michigan should be corrected and that the truth should be taught.

—Frank H. Culver, *The Founding of the University of Michigan.*

Appeal to Common Rationality.—Generally recognized truths, which when skillfully presented cannot fail to strike the reader as obvious, are often used in argument in an appeal to common rationality. This is the method of the parent or teacher in a put-yourself-in-my-place talk with a child. It is the method Ruskin uses in the closing paragraph of his plea for Turner (see page 554), where he asks the reader to imagine himself in the place of a man of sensitive temperament and noble intellect who had never in seventy years known sympathy, never any kind words, only condemnation and denial of success—would not that inevitably react upon the temper and explain much that seems morose and uncharitable in such a character? Charles Reade argues in the same way in his *Put Yourself in His Place.* One of the best of all such arguments in literature is, of course, that of Shylock in the *Merchant of Venice.*

. . . Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same disease, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Whether Shakespeare meant it so or not, he has presented here almost a complete logic for common humanity; his argument strikes home; it appeals to our sense of fairness and everyday rationality.

Cause and Effect.—The nature of reasoning based on cause and effect has been touched upon briefly in an earlier section of this chapter; it is, however, so important a form of the argumentative process that it will bear a few words more. An incredibly large proportion of our thinking is bound up with real or fancied causal relationships. We meet a friend in the hallway, and infer from his cheerful or gloomy greeting, as the case may be, the whole condition of his internal mental anatomy for that day; we read of a slight demonstration by a mob in Vienna, and may jump to the conclusion that the Austrian government is about to fall.

Reasoning by causal relationship is the favorite method of science; it is the method by which Newton arrived at his theory of gravitation, and by which Darwin was able to formulate his evolutionary hypothesis. Through a study of cause and effect relationship, Lazear, Reed, and others were able to establish the facts as to the deadly rôle of the mosquito in communicating yellow fever; and in the same way a dozen other diseases have been traced to their unholy origins. If the Hobbs Expedition find that there is a steady relationship between the descent of air currents from the ice-caps of Greenland and the arrival of blizzards at various points south they will have discovered the origin of many of our great storms, and will be able to make invaluable forecasts as to weather.

Psychologists, sociologists, historians, statesmen, educators, are all alike deeply concerned with the interplay of cause and effect. Causal relationship alone makes history mean anything; and progress can come only through applications of lessons thus learned.

III

The Brief

The outline has been discussed in an earlier section of this book, and need be reconsidered here only with regard to its particular adaptability to argument. Since argument is largely a matter of perceiving and showing logical relationships between ideas, the usefulness of any device which will emphasize these relationships is at once apparent. The special form of outline used in argument, called the *brief*, is designed to make such an emphasis. The brief differs from the ordinary outline largely in that it employs a set of conjunctions whose function is to show the precise relationship between successive ideas. In its simplicity, the form of the brief is made up of a statement of a conclusion or a proposition followed by a supporting statement of fact, evidence, or reason, introduced by the conjunction *for*. Thus,

I. The Sugar Bowl must be a prosperous business enterprise, for

1. The proprietor has recently made extensive additions to his plant, and
2. He has lately built an expensive new home.

A brief still simple, yet somewhat more complex, because of the necessity of showing a slightly more complicated relationship of ideas would be the following, which roughly outlines the reasoning of the Hollywood producers as reported in *The London Times:*

I. Hollywood producers must make a large percentage of low-standard films, or go out of business, for,

1. Although the producers themselves have

high ideals and would prefer to make high-class pictures, and

2. Numbers of people in America want such pictures; yet,
3. The æsthetic taste of a large section of the United States—the "hick" territory—is so low as to refuse patronage to anything but the "cheap" movie; consequently, since
4. Producers cannot operate at a loss, and
5. In order to avoid loss they must make pictures that will sell in this "hick" territory; therefore,
6. They pursue the only course possible until the artistic taste of the "hick" territory has been improved.

It will be at once seen how well suited this special form of outline is to the purpose of presenting a close line of argument where the relationship of ideas to each other must be clearly shown. If the argument is valid, seeing it in brief form will help to confirm its truth; if it is invalid, as this reasoning on the movie situation is shown to be later in this chapter, the fallacies are the more apparent. In arranging facts, evidence, and conclusions, in searching out valid relationships of ideas, cause and effect and otherwise, in proving or disproving a point, the brief is an invaluable aid, and no student who is learning to make effective arguments should try to get on without its support.

The following briefs may be studied as examples of the kind of outline from which a writer must often work. It will be noted that they are not all cut after the same pattern, but each is adapted to a particular subject and to an individual method of treating that subject matter. Mr. Capek's and Mr. Frank's articles formed a sort of

debate on the subject of American ideals. Both wrote in a more or less informal way, but effectively, nevertheless. Mr. Curtis was making a formal address before a college organization.

1. The Americanization of Europe
KAREL CAPEK [1]

I. The question: Should Europe Americanize herself?
II. The issue: Would it be safe for Europe to adopt American ideals?
III. The answer is, No. The prospect of an Americanized Europe is terrifying, for
  1. It would destroy the things that now make life in Europe most attractive, for
    a. It would mean the substitution of speed for leisurely artistic production and for enjoyment of work and of life, for
      (1) The American is concerned with increase of output but not with increase of life. And thus
    b. Americanization would mean an artificial measure of activity, for
      (1) There are things difficult to measure in units of activity, for
        (a) We cannot measure the efficiency of a philosopher by the speed with which he thinks.
        (b) We do not judge the beauty of a cathedral by the speed with which it was constructed.
        (c) Europe has been in very little haste in creating her architecture and her systems of thought; in fact, it has been broadminded laziness which has enriched Europe most. (The point is enforced by the contrast of a busy American business man in Europe—

[1] *New York Times Magazine*, New York, Sunday, May 16, 1926.

engrossed in business even at meal-time.)

c. By transplanting to her the watchword "Success," Americanization would demoralize Europe, for
   (1) It would substitute an unworthy ideal for the old traditions and noble ideals for which Europeans have been living and dying; and so
   (2) It would set up a standard, the realization of which would have deprived the world of the fruits of such genius as Shakespeare's, Beethoven's, and Balzac's, for
      (a) Many things foolish Europe has accomplished would have been left undone if those who did them had been thinking of success.

d. Americanization would mean substituting the idea of quantity for quality, the ideal of the "biggest" for the "best," but
   (1) Big things are not always the most desirable. Witness that
      (a) The creator of the world was not infected with this passion for bigness.
      (b) Europe herself has been created with diversity and interest the criterion, not bigness. She is a beautiful Venus, not a statue of liberty.

IV. Conclusion: "I could still mention a dozen ideals which we European natives call American ideals—the twelfth of which would bear the name of 'Dollar,' etc." (But these are not discussed; the implication is that each is as bad as those mentioned.)

2. In Defense of American Ideals

GLENN FRANK [1]

I. What is said to be wrong—

Recapitulation of Mr. Capek's argument:

Mr. Capek has attacked the sterile ideals of a materialistic

[1] *New York Times Magazine,* June 6, 1926.

and mechanized America, making specific charges against

a. Our speed—which, in contrast with the leisurely attitudes of Europe, destroys possibilities for creative, joyful living.

b. Our passion for success—which, in contrast with European ideals and traditions, is bound to produce a people insensitive to delicate and daring values.

c. Our passion for quantity—which is certain to produce a people less concerned with quality.

II. Admitted matter: Much of Mr. Capek's general contention as to our spiritual low levels.

III. Disputed matter: The charge that machine civilization is a dragon that must be slain if we are to save our souls.

IV. The point at issue then becomes: Is it necessary to destroy machine civilization in order to arrive at a satisfactory basis for living?

V. A restatement of the situation.

1. Artistically and culturally, America has fewer men of prominence than in Europe, but
2. In material comforts and educational advantages we are superior.
3. Just now, men of congenital superiority in America are flocking into materialistic pursuits, but
4. Increasing numbers are going into intellectual pursuits, and
5. The chances are, and history seems to prove this, when through this very materialism Mr. Capek deplores, a larger leisure class has evolved from our still young society, culture and the arts will come into their own. Moreover,
6. Mr. Capek exaggerates our single-minded devotion to materialism, as our reverence for brains and achievement in non-material fields shows.

VI. Direct refutation.

1. Unmitigated slavery to speed is indeed bad, but
2. Machine civilization need not mean such slavery, for
   a. With better statesmanship in industry this very speed may mean increased leisure, and

b. With perfection of processes in mass production, more statesmanship among captains of industry may be expected. Moreover,

c. It is a waste of time to sigh for the old leisurely handicraft world: the machine world is here to stay; let us make the best of it;

d. It is only through mastery of machinery, not its abolition, that we shall gain the leisure necessary for the kind of life Mr. Capek desires.

VII. Constructive appeal. Two main theories are in conflict, represented by the way of the engineer and the way of the social mystic.

1. The social mystic would combat the evils of centralized industry by abolishing machinery and returning to a handicraft society—Gandhi's plan.
2. The engineer would combat these evils by decentralizing industry, returning the factory to the rural district, the factory-laborer to a diversified occupation, part farm, part machine work—Ford's plan.
3. The engineer's plan seems worth a trial before we condemn machinery altogether.

3. The Leadership of Educated Men

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

A. Introduction

1. Approach to audience through reference to the picture "How They Met Themselves," and application to returned alumni meeting themselves—flowing, dreaming youths.
2. Approach to subject—scholars, you are, educated men to whom the honor and renown of the educated class are precious.
3. Statement of the situation—there is a profound distrust of the courage and sagacity of the educated class. Educated men are called cowards, laggards, bigots.
4. Putting the question—"Is this true?"
5. The question at issue. (Not stated, but implied—a question the speaker must have put to himself before preparing the argument): If it can be proved that a large percentage

of the really representative educated men of the world or of any land have been courageous, vigorous leaders in civic, religious, and national affairs the charge will be proved untrue.

6. The right attitude in looking at this question: We must not judge a group by its failures but by its representative men.
7. Statement of stand. Those who declare the educated class to be made up of cowards, laggards, and bigots are judging it by its failures.

B. The argument

The accusation is untrue, for

I. Great progressive world movements have been led by educated men, for

1. Luther, Roger Williams, and Wendell Phillips were educated men.
2. The Reformation was the work of the educated class.
3. The movement for liberty in detail has been directed by educated men, for
   a. England's champions of liberty were educated men.
   b. The only wise direction of the French Revolution was under educated men.
   c. Ireland's apostles of liberty were educated men.
   d. Modern Italy's leaders are educated men.
   e. Modern Germany's leaders are educated men.
4. The destinies of America have been molded by educated men, for
   a. She was guided through her first crisis by educated men.
      (1) It was an educated Sam Adams and an educated Jonathan Mayhew who announced doctrines in Pre-Revolutionary days that lighted the fires of resistance to England.

(2) It was a son of Harvard, Otis, and other educated men who first proposed independent congresses and assemblies for America, and finally through their brilliant oratory and example swept the country into rebellion.

(3) Educated men conducted the mighty preliminary argument of the Revolution, and led the colonists to victory in the Revolutionary War.

b. She was guided through her second crisis by educated men, for

(1) Educated men guided America in the critical period of our beginnings as a nation.

(Argument driven home—amplified, rounded out, reënforced. Leadership defined. The best of leadership, educated leadership, it is shown, directed our affairs in the winning and making good our independence.)

c. She was guided through her third great crisis by educated men, for

(1) Men like Adams, Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Emerson led in the fight against slavery.

(2) In Congress men like Sumner directed the policies of the government. (Point rounded out and driven home.)

5. "As Educated America was the constructive power, so it is still the true conservative force of the Republic," for

a. Educated men have faith enough in the people to appeal to them against themselves.

b. To expose the sophists who mislead the mob, for

(1) They know that "a crowd is not wiser than the wisest man in it." (Reasoning to show the need of all this.)

c. It is the educated minority which is most loyal to the legitimate rights of the majority, for

(1) Educated leaders are vigilant in opposition to the well-oiled party machine and the party boss.

C. Conclusion

1. An estimate in eulogistic terms of the educated power of the country: Take away the educated power, and you take away the mainspring of all that is best and safest in American life. If American scholarship is not in place, it is in power. It is calm, patient, confident, heroic.
2. Appeal to brethren of Brown to renew the pledge, to do their part to lift America above the slough of mercenary politics and the cunning snares of trade.

IV

Literary Forms and Concrete Illustration in Argument

The place of literary forms in argument has already been mentioned. But the importance of the so-called thesis drama and novel as a means to conviction and persuasion is so great as to warrant a separate section for their discussion. Most of us have a feeling that when a novel or play exists for the purpose of presenting an argument it loses dignity and effectiveness as an art form, the first business of which is to present and illuminate life. But whatever such works may lack as art forms, they are often tremendously effective in creating belief and arousing to action. In fact, it would seem that descriptive and narrative recital and dramatic representation have in the

past produced results out of all proportion to those brought about by straight argument.

The Practice of the Ancients.—The ancients well recognized this principle, and both in precept and practice made provision in their oratory for narrative and description—*narratio,* the Latins called it, *διήγησις,* the Greeks. So it came about that Demosthenes led up to his mighty denunciations of Philip by reciting to his hearers what Philip had done; and, likewise, Cicero, wishing to arouse the senate against Cataline, preliminary to his demand for punitive action, first dramatically painted a picture of Cataline's incriminatory deeds. This method is familiar enough in our modern courts and legislative chambers: it was the means by which Macaulay gave point to his demand for the impeachment of Warren Hastings, and by which Henry Grady secured results in demanding a declaration of war against Spain—his recital of atrocities he had witnessed in Cuba is said to have turned the scale toward an actual decision; and it is the method of hundreds of our skillful lawyers in accusation and defense in criminal cases. Young men and women contemplating law, politics, or like public pursuits may well bear these facts in mind and consider thorough training in narrative as part of their essential preparation. The influence of narrative in argument extends to almost every department of life, in affairs both large and small. It may be remarked in passing that not plain facts, not mere love of democracy, not love of France and England, nor any practical considerations, so much as the emotional effects of vivid stories of German ambition and cruelty—*Schrecklickheit*—influenced the American people to go into the Great War in aid of the Allies. The argumentative force of artful descriptive narrative is illustrated in much modern advertising. Perhaps the most telling advertisements to be found in our great dailies and magazines are those in

which the descriptive and narrative arts are intelligently used.

The power of narrative in moral and ethical and political and educational matters is well known. To realize anew the force of the *narratio* in religious argument, it is only necessary to remind ourselves that both the Hebrews and the Greeks maintained and propagated their religions chiefly through story and myth, and that the modern minister who can place Biblical narrative before his audience effectively has infinitely more power than he who is full of proverbs and maxims. Every one knows, too, what really tremendous results have been achieved through novels and dramas. It is said that in such novels as *Bleak House, Oliver Twist,* and *David Copperfield,* Dickens did more to bring about better conditions in schools and prisons in England than was effected in all the speeches in Parliament and editorials and pamphlets put together. Kingsley's *Alton Locke* did somewhat the same thing for the "sweated" industries; Harriet Beecher Stowe's part in precipitating the Civil War and in bringing about the emancipation of slaves is a matter of history; Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* admittedly resulted in a revolution in the meat-packing world; and so one might go on enumerating novelists who have produced memorable arguments. In the field of drama, while perhaps there have been fewer cases of immediate reaction, the influence has been no less significant. For instance, there probably exists no single more compelling document upon the subject of the right relationship between husband and wife in marriage than Ibsen's argument in *The Doll's House;* and, again, where can there be found another such convincing case against the futility and insane wastefulness of inexorable warfare between capital and labor as in Galsworthy's *Strife?*

Now, as has been suggested, not every one who has an argument to make can write a novel or a drama to con-

vince and stir his readers, nor would he care to do so if he could; yet there is no one who cannot cultivate himself in the art of concrete illustration. The significance of the preceding illustrations, and the excuse for giving so much space to them in a chapter on Argumentation lies in this. It should be apparent that no one who intends to argue effectively can afford to neglect to take lessons from those who have learned the cogency of narrative and dramatic appeal. As has been pointed out, orators and writers of power from the days of Demosthenes to the present have understood this and have governed their practice in accordance with their knowledge.

There is, to be sure, a place for cold, abstract reasoning. Philosophers and mathematicians frequently indulge in purely abstract speculation. But philosophers and mathematicians are often misunderstood, and they are always infinitely more intelligible when they translate their intangibilities into concrete illustration. Many writers on philosophical and mathematical subjects are now doing this very thing—with infinite gain in lucidity.

And certainly for most practical purposes, from establishing the infamy of one's favorite enemy to selling correspondence courses or starting a world war, the narration of specific fact with a suggested chain of reasoning and an expressed or implied conclusion, is an indispensable adjunct to argument. It owes its force to a truth already emphasized in this chapter: that in order to be convinced, the average human mind must be made to *see,* and nothing so helps one to see as to know.

V

Fallacies

Fallacies in argument are as numerous as the poor in China. Much that passes for good argument, much, in

fact, that turns out to be convincing argument with the general public, is in reality fallacious, and may be detected as such under the scrutiny of the judicious mind.

The most hopeless sort of fallacy results, of course, when a mind which is habitually a stranger to the simplest forms of logic and which is at the same time devoid of the most elementary principles of evidence and truth, flounders in an attempt at reasoned argument.

At one point in his *The Growth of the Soil,* Hamsun draws a picture of such an illogical mind at work. The occasion is the mysterious death of Barbro's new-born child. Alex has begun to suspect that Barbro has deliberately killed it. Barbro knows this, and clumsily tries to argue his fears away.

> She had three main arguments which she was continually advancing: In the first place she had not done it. In the second, it was not such a terrible thing after all, if she had done it. But in the third place, it would never be found out.

This is an unusually blundering line of argument, for even the stupid mind often displays a sort of craft in self-defense; but it illustrates admirably the empty shows of reasoning that may go on in the untutored brain.

It would be easy to make a long list of possible fallacies in argument, but it is both practicable and convenient to classify all such fallacies under two large heads: fallacies in evidence and fallacies in reasoning.

Fallacies in evidence may take the form of partial and insufficient fact, inaccuracy or falsification of fact, or the substitution of ignorant prejudice, presupposition, tradition, conjecture, or what not, for fact. Fallacies in reasoning are the result of the illogical workings of illogical minds. They take the form of arguing from false premises; of errors in attributing causes to given effects, or *vice*

versa; of begging the question, that is, assuming that a thing is true without proof; of a facile linking of unrelated facts in an apparently related sequence leading to a false conclusion, and so forth. But to distinguish between these separate types of faulty reasoning is of small importance in comparison with the value of an analysis of the fundamental characteristics of untenable as opposed to valid argument. In the pages that follow, there will, therefore, be no pretense at making exhaustive distinctions; only an attempt to help students recognize the inherent qualities of the true as opposed to the false in reasoned persuasion.

The Fallacy of Unsupported Assertion.—Unsupported assertion is the tool of the prejudiced, the arrogant, and the presumptuous, and it is the vice of the careless and ignorant. It is easy for your opponent in politics to whisper to his neighbor that you are immoral, and to give the credit to "they say." It is likewise simplicity itself to assert that college students are as a rule idle and vicious, and that their professors are narrow, bigoted, and lazy. The majority seldom demand proof; and the temptation to make charges in the assurance of an easy credulity is often too great for the weak and unprincipled to resist, as is likewise the impulse of those who wish to appear authorities on great or smaller questions. This explains alike the solemn and soul-stirring assertions, made at intervals since the time of Christ, that the world was coming to an end on a certain day and hour, and the tittle-tattle of neighborhood gossip in a small-town sewing circle.

The best answer to unsupported assertion is, of course, a presentation of the facts. Thus a recent book destroyed at one stroke the pretensions of certain over-advertised products for which extravagant and unscientific claims had been made. And in the same way Ruskin replied to current charges against Turner. Ruskin's argument should

be studied as a model of effective refutation of unsupported assertion.[1]

And now let me tell you something of his personal character. You have heard him spoken of as ill-natured, and jealous of his brother artists. I will tell you how jealous he was. I knew him for ten years, and during that time had much familiar intercourse with him. I *never once* heard him say an unkind thing of a brother artist, and I *never once heard him find a fault* with another man's work. I could say this of *no other* artist whom I have ever known.

But I will add a piece of evidence on this matter of peculiar force. Probably many here have read a book which has been lately published, to my mind one of extreme interest and value, the life of the unhappy artist, Benjamin Haydon. Whatever may have been his faults, I believe no person can read his journal without coming to the conclusion that his heart was honest, and that he does not *wilfully* misrepresent any fact, or any person. Even supposing otherwise, the expression I am going to quote to you would have all the more force, because, as you know, Haydon passed his whole life in war with the Royal Academy, of which Turner was one of the most influential members. Yet in the midst of one of his most violent expressions of exultation at one of his victories over the Academy, he draws back suddenly with these words: "But Turner behaved well, and did me justice."

I will give you, however, besides, two plain facts illustrative of Turner's "jealousy."

You have, perhaps not many of you, heard of a painter of the name of Bird; I do not myself know his works, but Turner saw some merit in them: and when Bird first sent a picture to the Academy, for exhibition, Turner was on the hanging committee. Bird's picture had great merit; but no place for it could be found. Turner pleaded hard for it. No, the thing was impossible. Turner sat down and looked at Bird's picture a long time; then insisted that a place must be found for it. He was still met by the assertion of impracticability. He said no more, but took down one of his own pictures, sent it out of the Academy, and hung Bird's in its place.

Match that, if you can, among the annals of hanging committees. But he could do nobler things than this.

[1] RUSKIN, "Lecture III—Turner and his Works," *Lectures on Architecture and Painting,* pp. 145-150.

When Turner's picture of Cologne was exhibited in the year 1826, it hung between two portraits, by Sir Thomas Lawrence, of Lady Wallscourt, and Lady Robert Manners.

The sky of Turner's picture was exceedingly bright, and it had a most injurious effect on the colour of the two portraits. Lawrence naturally felt mortified, and complained openly of the position of his pictures. You are aware that artists were at that time permitted to retouch their pictures on the walls of the Academy. On the morning of the opening of the exhibition, at the private view, a friend of Turner's who had seen the Cologne, in all its splendor, led a group of expectant critics up to the picture. He started back from it in consternation. The golden sky had changed to a dun colour. He ran up to Turner, who was in another part of the room. "Turner, *what* have you been doing to your picture?" "Oh," muttered Turner, in a low voice, "poor Lawrence was so unhappy. It's only lamp black. It'll all wash off after the exhibition!" He had actually passed a wash of lamp black in water colour over the whole sky, and utterly spoiled his picture for the time, and so left it through the exhibition, lest it should hurt Lawrence's.

You may easily find instances of self-sacrifice where men have strong motives, and where large benefits are to be conferred by the effort, or general admiration obtained by it; but of pure, unselfish, and perfect generosity, showing itself in a matter of minor interest, and when few could be aware of the sacrifice made, you will not easily find such another example as this.

Thus much for his jealousy of his brother-artists. You have also heard much of his niggardliness in money transactions. A great part of what you have heard is perfectly true, allowing for the exaggeration which always takes place in the accounts of an eccentric character. But there are other parts of Turner's conduct of which you have never heard; and which, if truly reported, would set his niggardliness in a very different light. Every person from whom Turner exacted a due shilling, proclaimed the exaction far and wide; but the persons to whom Turner gave hundreds of pounds were prevented, by their "delicacy," from reporting the kindness of their benefactor. I may, however, perhaps, be permitted to acquaint you with one circumstance of this nature, creditable alike to both parties concerned.

At the death of a poor drawing master, Mr. Wells, whom Turner had long known, he was deeply affected, and lent money to the widow until a large sum had accumulated. She was both honest and grateful, and after a long period was happy enough to be able to return to her benefactor the whole sum she had received from him. She waited on him with it; but Turner kept his hands in his pocket. "Keep it," he said, "and send your children to school, and to church." He said this in bitterness; he had himself been sent to neither.

Well, but you will answer to me, we have heard Turner all our lives stigmatised as brutal, and uncharitable, and selfish, and miserly. How are we to understand these opposing statements?

Easily. I have told you truly what Turner was. You have often heard what to most people he appeared to be. Imagine what it was for a man to live seventy years in this hard world, with the kindest heart and the noblest intellect of his time, and never to meet with a single word or ray of sympathy, until he felt himself sinking into the grave. From the time he knew his true greatness all the world was turned against him: he held his own; but it could not be without roughness of bearing, and hardening of the temper, if not of the heart. No one understood him, no one trusted him, and every one cried out against him. Imagine, any of you, the effect upon your own minds, if every voice that you heard from the human beings around you were raised, year after year, through all your lives, only in condemnation of your efforts, and denial of your success. This may be borne, and borne easily, by men who have fixed religious principles, or supporting domestic ties. But Turner had no one to teach him in his youth, and no one to love him in his old age. Respect and affection, if they came at all, came unbelieved, or came too late. Naturally irritable, though kind,—naturally suspicious, though generous,—the gold gradually became dim, and the most fine gold changed, or, if not changed, overcast and clouded. The deep heart was still beating, but it was beneath a dark and melancholy mail between whose joints, however, sometimes the slightest arrows found entrance, and power of giving pain. He received no consolation in his last years, nor in his death. Cut off in great part from all society,—first, by labour, and at last by sickness,—hunted to his grave by the malignities of

small critics, and the jealousies of hopeless rivalry, he died in the house of a stranger,—one companion of his life, and one only, staying with him to the last. The window of his death-chamber was turned towards the west, and the *sun* shone upon his face in its setting and rested there, as he expired.

The Fallacy of Popular Belief.—Fallacies of popular belief are such as grow up through tradition, sometimes superstition, as opposed to belief built upon fact and scientific data. Reasoning based upon such belief is, of course, fallacious. There was no possibility of true conclusions in astronomy while men believed that the earth was the center of the universe, nor could there be a basis for psychology until it was no longer taken for granted that the heart was the seat of certain mental activities. When it was assumed that the earth was flat, all reasoning about extensive travel on its surface was necessarily conditioned by this belief, and inevitably ran like this:

> All flat surfaces have boundaries and must come to an end.
> The earth is a flat surface.
> The earth's surface has boundaries and comes to an end, and ships sailing to that end must fall off.

Hence arose all sorts of superstitions about the nature of far-off sections of the earth and the dangers of ocean navigation beyond certain prescribed limits—legends of whirlpools, of boiling seas, and fathomless abysms into which sailors disappear never to return. Like errors in reasoning have resulted at all times from limitations and error in scientific knowledge. Aristotle was the chief scientist and logician of his day, but because of necessarily large gaps in his factual backgrounds, some of his conclusions were entirely faulty, and we read them today with amusement, if not with amazement. As Will Durant points out, he was particularly fertile in physiological errors. Thus:

. . . . . he knows nothing of muscles, not even of their existence; he does not distinguish arteries from veins; he thinks the brain is an organ for cooling the blood; he believes, forgivably, that man has more sutures in the skull than woman; he believes, less forgivably, that man has only eight ribs on each side; he believes, incredibly, and unforgivably, that woman has fewer teeth than man. Apparently his relations with women were of the most amicable kind.

—*The Story of Philosophy.*

The fallacy of popular belief is especially common among primitive and untutored peoples, but it is not by any means limited to them. The case of Aristotle proves that. We are not at all free from such fallacies today. All sorts of legendary half-truths have fastened themselves upon the popular mind in America, for instance, and show themselves bitterly unyielding before the slow advance of intelligent information. Some of these are the belief that slaves were generally treated brutally by their Southern masters, the common notion that witches were burned at Salem, the feeling still prevalent in many quarters that the English people as a whole were unfair and unfriendly to America before the Revolutionary War, and that therefore every good American should hate England. New fallacies of this sort are being constantly built up. Some years ago, for instance, Owen Wister publicly accused Harold Bell Wright of fostering in his novels the belief that all wealthy men are morally corrupt; and there are many who recognize fallacy in the assumption now common in many quarters—resting on the efforts of Sinclair Lewis and others—that our Middle West is more ignorant than other parts of America.

The Fallacy of Begging the Question.—To beg the question is to take an argument for granted before it is proved. This is one of the most insidious of fallacies, hence one of the most prevalent. Most superstitions and many of the popular fallacies of which we have been talk-

ing owe their origin to the tendency of untrained minds to beg the question. "The toad should be hated and shunned, for he is venomous," it was once argued. But no one had ever proved he was venomous; the question was simply begged, much to the prejudice of the toad, until some scientifically-minded person came along and showed how inoffensive he really is. But even the more educated are often guilty of this fallacy. Athens was a fairly intelligent place, yet Socrates was condemned to death for corrupting the youth of the city, without its once being proved how or when he had corrupted them. And nowadays the public freely condemns men and groups of men suspected of crime or wrongdoing without first requiring proofs. The law refuses to beg the question in such cases by assuming the accused innocent until proved guilty, but not so the public. The English writer who attributed the low plane of the movies to the relatively degraded taste of the Middle West was begging the question until he could show that this taste was really below that of the average elsewhere. Glenn Frank thought that Mr. Capek in his condemnation of our modern machine civilization was guilty of begging the question for the reason that he had not shown that such machinery was really a detriment to culture. Bryan undoubtedly begged the question when he asserted, "Fortunately only five per cent of our young people are in college; the rest still have souls." And so the game of begging the question goes merrily on; but among people who look beneath mere assertion for fact and proof, it is a very precarious pastime indeed.

The Fallacy of Misconception.—The fallacy of misconception of a problem is not ordinarily treated in the textbooks, yet it is a very common fallacy, and is certainly not the least perilous. It must be admitted at the start that there is often no absolute standard by which to establish a notion or a belief as a misconception. There are, however, the aggregate of social experience, the lessons to

be learned from history, and the force of logic to back one up in anything like a sound argument against a misconception.

Misconceptions are often difficult to down. It has taken much argument and some war to rid civilized nations of certain misconceptions—that kings were necessary, for instance, or that human slavery was essential to comfort and economic well-being. Perhaps a modern misconception is the belief that wars are inevitable. Many people misconceive certain fundamental problems of life. Such is the old fallacy maintained by the shiftless and ne'er-do-wells that "the world owes me a living." Another misconception is the thesis sometimes held that the individual can and has a right to live in entire independence of the rest of the world.

Since even the best thinkers do not always agree on what is truth and what misconception, there arises vigorous and prolonged debate on questions connected with all sorts of problems: methods in education, the subject matter of religious instruction, the proper function of government, means of national defense. In the field of the arts there is constant argument arising from disagreement as to what are and what are not true conceptions. In his book on the English novel, Sidney Lanier attacks what he conceives to be the fallacious notion that one can learn to write by instinct without consciously studying and mastering the technique of his language. What Lanier has to say is of such interest to students of composition that his argument is quoted here, as the sole example of refutation of the misconception of a problem.[1]

> This fallacy—of supposing that we do a thing by instinct simply because we learned to do it unsystematically and without formal teaching—seems a curious enough climax to the misconceptions of literary science. You have only to reflect a moment in order to

[1] *The English Novel,* pp. 34-37.

see that not a single line of verse was ever written by instinct alone since the world began. For—to go no farther—the most poetically-instinctive child is obliged at least to learn the science of language—the practical relation of noun and verb and connective—before the crudest line of verse can be written; and since no child talks by instinct, since every child has to learn from others every word it uses,—with an amount of diligence and of study which is really stupendous when we think of it—what wild absurdity to forget these years passed by the child in learning even the rudiments of the science of language which must be well in hand, mind you, before even the rudiments of the science of verse can be learned—what wild absurdity to fancy that one is writing verse by instinct when even the language of verse, far from being instinctive, had to be painfully, if unsystematically, learned as a science.

. . . . .

The writer of verse is afraid of having too much form, of having too much technic; he dreads it will interfere with his spontaneity. No more decisive confession of weakness can be made. It is only cleverness and small talent which is afraid of its spontaneity; the genius, the great artist, is forever ravenous after new forms, after technic; he will follow you to the ends of the earth if you will enlarge his artistic science, if you will give him a fresh form. For indeed genius, the great artist, never works in the frantic vein vulgarly supposed; a large part of the work of the poet, for example, is selective: a dozen ideas in a dozen forms throng to his brain at once, he must choose the best; even in the extremest heat and sublimity of his *raptus* he must preserve a god-like calm, and order thus and so, and keep the rule so that he shall to the end be master of his art and not be mastered by his art.

. . . . .

There is an old aphorism—it is twelve hundred years old—which covers all this ground of the importance of technic, of science, in the literary art, with such completeness and compactness that it always affects me like a poem. It was uttered, indeed, by a poet,—and a rare one he must have been,—an old Armorican named Herve, of whom all manner of beautiful stories have survived. The aphorism is: "He who will not answer to the rudder, must answer to the rocks." If any of you have read that wonderful description of shipwreck on these same Armorican rocks which occurs in the

autobiography of Millet, the painter, and which was recently quoted in a number of *Scribner's Magazine,* you can realize that one who lived in that old Armorica—the modern Brittany from which Millet comes—knew full well what it meant to answer to the rocks.

Now it is precisely this form, this science, this technic, which is the rudder of the literary artist, whether he work at verse or novel. I wish it were everywhere written, even in the souls of all our young American writers, that he who will not answer to the rudder shall answer to the rocks. This was the belief of the greatest literary artist our language has ever produced.

We have direct contemporary testimony that Shakspeare was supremely solicitous in this matter of form. Ben Jonson, in that heavy testimonial, "To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author, Mr. William Shakspeare, and What He Hath Left Us," which was prefixed to the edition of 1623, says, after praises which are lavish even for an Elizabethan eulogy:

> "Yet must I not give Nature all: thy art," (meaning here thy technic, thy care of form, thy science)
> "My gentle Shakspeare, must enjoy a part;
> For though the poet's matter Nature be,
> His art doth give the fashion; and that he
> Who casts to write a living line must sweat,
> (Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
> Upon the Muses' anvil; turn the same
> (And himself with it) that he thinks to frame;
> Or for the laurel he may gain a scorn,
> *For a good poet's made as well as born,*
> *And such wert thou.* Look how the father's face
> Lives in his issue, even so the race
> Of Shakspeare's mind and manners brightly shines
> *In his well-turned* and *true-filed lines.*
> *In each of which he seems to shake a lance,*
> As brandished at the eyes of Ignorance."

No fear with Shakspeare of damaging his spontaneity: he shakes a lance at the eyes of Ignorance in every line.

The Fallacy of Prejudice.—Argument which has its basis in any sort of misinformation or which wittingly or

unwittingly suppresses or juggles facts or misapplies them in any way, and is influenced in any manner to conclusions independently of the truth in the case, is inevitably bad. A special and all too common type of this sort of argument is that which rests upon mere feeling and prejudice.

Goldsmith's account of the old soldier who hated the French because they were all slaves and wore wooden shoes, furnishes an excellent example of invalid argument. Here Goldsmith accurately portrays a mental process common among untutored folk whose minds never reach beyond preconception and prejudice in a search for reasons. Unfortunately, even those who ought to know better often fall victim to this fallacy. Many so-called educated people are still possessed of unfounded religious animosities; many, likewise, maintain a steady opposition to anything new, either in science or in thought; many more cherish international hatreds that can rest upon no firmer foundation than traditional dislike handed down from previous generations. The unfortunate thing is that from such impassioned misconceptions arise wars and rumors of wars, life is made less pleasant and beautiful, and progress is seriously retarded.

The best way to refute prejudiced argument is, of course, to present the facts. These facts will rarely affect the one bearing the prejudice—it is to be feared that a person once thoroughly mastered by a prejudice is hopeless, and must be left to die in his sins—but they will save others from like errors perhaps, and will set right many who are undecided.

Daniel Defoe's poem, *The True-Born Englishman,* furnishes an example of the effective use of facts to refute the conclusions of uninformed prejudice. Defoe was writing in answer to a rather scurrilous attack made upon William III (who it will be remembered was of Dutch birth) in a poem called *The Foreigners.* Here were summed up all the odious crimes of foreigners in England,

specifically the Dutch. Defoe's method was to point out, satirically but, in general, truthfully, that, considering the polyglot nature of the English people, it is about as fair for one person as another to call himself the "true-born Englishman." The Anglo-Saxons displaced the Britons and Celts; then came the Danes; and after them the Normans. And later there were heavy infiltrations from almost every neighboring land. From the time of Henry V, England had been a refuge for outcasts and vagabonds; in Queen Elizabeth's charitable reign there came three hundred thousand men—Dutch, Walloons, Flemings, Irishmen, Scots, Vaudois, and Huguenots; during King Charles's time, the banished Protestants of France flocked in—"two hundred thousand pairs of wooden shoes." And these, declared Defoe,

> Borrowing new Blood and Manners from the clime,
> Proudly they learn all Mankind to contemn,
> And all their Race are true-born Englishmen.

Since Englishmen, then, are all more or less foreigners, why cast stones at these latest comers? Defoe's argument, in spite of some hyperbole and a good deal of carelessness in his application of such terms as "outcasts" and "vagabonds," was telling, and won almost instant acceptance.

Fallacy of Definition.—In a section on "College Spirit" in his *The Voice of the Scholar,* David Starr Jordan is attacking a common definition of college spirit and arguing for a more rational interpretation:

> If our college faculties had the academic courage and academic patriotism which our people have the right to demand of them, most of the evils of college life would speedily disappear. The worst training a young man can have is that of physical and intellectual idleness. Free education should be reserved for those who have the mind and the will to receive it. There is no education without effort. Those who do not want an education have no place in

college. A firm insistence on the demands of scholarship would do away with rowdies and rowdyism.

It is not often the real scholar that leads in rushing and hazing. The clash rush is a product of sheer rowdyism. It is the work of the college bullies. It is dangerous because it has no time limit, no rules, no training. When a man is hurt in its rough-and-tumble activity, the blame falls, and rightly so, on the college.

Of the same nature is hazing, with this difference, that hazing is essentially the coward's part. It is half a dozen against one, and always involves infringement of the rights and liberties of free men. Such affairs are not indications of college spirit. They are not, like amateur athletics, in aid of the good name of the college. It does not enhance the reputation of one of our great universities that the papers are full of the hair-cutting scrapes of her freshmen and sophomores. It adds nothing to the glory of another institution of honored name that her sophomores break up the freshman dance by throwing skunks into the ball-room. It is against the good name of any college that sophomore bullies carry away freshman class presidents or lock up the escorts of ladies at a junior ball. It is not to the credit of any institution that bogus programs and anonymous insults, inane or obscene, are circulated on its campus. Stealing ice-cream is very much like ordinary stealing, and rowdyism in all its forms makes the development of honest college spirit hopeless. Comradeship among free spirits,—what decent man cares to be the comrade of a bully?

It is a weakness of our state universities that their students sometimes mistake rowdyism for spirit and brutality for democracy. These institutions are thoroughly democratic, that is a matter of course, but we must not forget that democracy is not inconsistent with courtesy. Other things being equal, the better the manners, the better the man. The same spirit that leads to rowdyism in a state institution reappears as imbecility in some other kinds of colleges. There is little choice between the two. It is lack of inventive power that leads the midnight student to take the president's carriage to pieces, to put his cow into the bell-tower, or to stack up the gates of the town in his back yard. It is imbecility that leads college men to assert their own independence by discourtesy to college women. It is imbecility that causes college boys to take up one after another a series of unpleasant fads, the fad of swiping

signs, of stealing spoons, of running away with some one's bric-à-brac.

Another peculiarly disagreeable fad, caught from the street gamin, is seen or heard at some of our athletic games. The mob at a ball game tries to rattle the pitcher, to confuse the catcher, or to so crowd about that an opposing team has not only the local team to meet, but the whole student body as well. It is not genuine college spirit that has turned many a football game in the Middle West into something very much like a riot. The institution that permits this sort of thing consents to its own disgrace. It is upon the apathy of college faculties that the blame must finally rest. It is for such performances as these that aristocratic Harvard has invented the term of "mucker." Whatever else Harvard may be, she is "anti-mucker" through and through. The movement toward athletic courtesy perhaps had its origin in Harvard, and I hope for the spread of its influence. When a Yale batter strikes a foul and returns to his base, he finds the Harvard catcher handing him his bat. That a man may play a strenuous game, the fiercest ever seen on the gridiron and yet keep the speech and manners of a gentleman, is one of the lessons Harvard may teach us, and we of the West cannot listen to any better lesson in college spirit.

Our student bodies as well as our college faculties have been too tolerant of petty trickery. This is shown in student elections, which would often give points to the most corrupt of city governments. The man of college spirit will vote for the best representative of the college. The vulgar college politician sees only the chance of combination. Many men will even prostitute their fraternity relations by making that association a mere means of political influence. President White used to call "college politics a pewter imitation of a pinchbeck original." I have never known a successful politician of the "win at any cost" sort who became a useful man in after-life. I have known some who have risen in politics—risen for a while until they have been found out. As grown men they have disgraced the state, just as, when boys, they brought their college into ill-repute. Cheating in examinations is of a piece with cheating in politics. A sound college spirit finds no place for such things.

The same evil spirit which at times controls student elections often works havoc with the usefulness of athletics. I believe thoroughly in college athletics. I have taken my part in them in college

and out, and I know that other things being equal, the athletic man is worth more to the community than other kinds of men. But other things may not be equal. The athletic tramp should receive no academic welcome. The athletic parasite is no better than any other parasite. The man who is in college for athletics alone, disgraces the college, degrades athletics, and shuts out a better man for his place on the team. In tolerating the presence of athletes who do not study, the college faculty becomes party to a fraud. Some of our greatest institutions stand disgraced in the eyes of the college world, by reason of the methods employed to win football victories.

At the best, athletics is a by-play in the business of education, most useful in its place, but most damaging if it breaks down academic standards. To relieve football men from all necessity of scholarship during the football period is to strike a blow at the dignity and honesty of the college. More than one institution is doing this at the present time. The college that does its duty to its students is the one in which the football tramp, the professional athlete, finds no place. Nothing I have seen in the University of Missouri has pleased me more than the firm stand it has taken for decency in athletics, and that too when the traditions of fraud, the impulse to win at any cost, were at their very strongest.

The Fallacy of Half-Truth.—One of the most dangerous because it is one of the most insidious types of fallacious argument is that based upon half-truth. This usually takes the form of generalization upon incomplete evidence. It is to be seen illustrated in its simplicity in the attitude of people who have had either a very pleasant or unpleasant experience with one or more members of a profession or class. One or two unfortunate dealings with a lawyer, and the conclusion is drawn that all lawyers are crooks; one or two instances of worldliness and hypocrisy in a minister, and the clergy as a whole is damned. A charge with much more of earnest in it than its half-facetious tone would suggest, used to be hurled by certain midwestern Republicans at their political rivals. "Not all Democrats are horse thieves," they would say, "but all horse thieves are Democrats." Such unsupported charges

have nothing to do with true argument, yet, repeated often enough, they take, and too often with deadly effect.

An example of the serious misconceptions that may arise from the emphasis of half-truth and the drawing of hasty conclusion based thereon occurred in the winter of 1926-27 in connection with suicide among college students. Here the reports of a few self-inflicted deaths among students were quickly seized upon as evidence of a "suicide wave." But in an article in *Harper's Magazine* shortly after the crest of the excitement had passed, Silas Bent presented facts to show that the exploitation of this so-called "suicide wave" was merely newspaper "ballyhoo," manufactured for the delight of sensation-loving readers. While a bit hard on the newspapers, perhaps, Mr. Bent puts the whole matter convincingly:[1]

> Before we go farther we may look for a moment at the reported "suicide wave" among school and college students. This did not run to such great lengths as were threatened before a damper was applied from an expected quarter; but while it ran the going was fine, from the newspaper standpoint. It will serve very well as an illustration of the origin and development of a fortuitous ballyhoo.
>
> Two students, sons of men nationally known, destroyed themselves within a brief period. This was enough to set the press casting about for an epidemic of such suicides. Obscure cases at a distance, which would have been ignored in ordinary circumstances, suddenly assumed first-page importance. Each new instance was blazoned as an addition to the "suicide wave" among students.
>
> "We have waves of news," says William Lewis Butcher of the New York State Crime Commission, "and we think we are having waves of crime." This passage of the report of his sub-commission, which studied the relation of the daily press to crime and the administration of justice, is worth quoting more at length, as bearing on the wave of news about student suicides.
>
> The average person is always unduly impressed by that which is prominently displayed and which has unusual

[1] *Harper's Magazine*, Sept. 1927, pp. 487-488.

attendant circumstances or which has been brought vividly to his attention in some other way. Consequently, the average reader of newspapers is oftentimes led to the belief that a crime wave is in progress because he has been reading an unusual amount of crime news. This distributive tendency is largely the result of the exigencies of the newspaper business. Crime news is an ever-present source of newspaper "copy." It can be used when other sorts of news are not readily available. It is probable that if careful compilation should be made of the actual number of crimes committed over a period of weeks and months, and if this should be compared with the amount of crime news published during the same period, it would be found that the amount of news bore no direct relation at all to the actual amount of crime.

Such a comparison is precisely what was made in regard to the so-called "suicide wave" among students. A statistician for a life insurance company stepped forward coolly with the facts, showing that in truth the percentage of suicide among persons under twenty years of age had been falling off quite steadily for sixteen years, the period covered by his investigation. Instead of a "wave" there was a subsidence!

No newspaper had the good grace to display this significant utterance as prominently as it had displayed student suicides, so far as my extended observation went. Some of them printed it as a "shirt-tail" to a current suicide. Meanwhile the editors of Sunday supplements had been interviewing psychoanalysts, preachers, deans of colleges, physicians, and professors about the "wave." Was it a post-war neurosis? Was the break-up of the home to blame? Was prohibition, mayhap, at the bottom of it? If not, what have you? All this pother, mark you, about a phenomenon which was no phenomenon because it did not exist, as any newspaper could have informed itself had it been more concerned with the truth than with preying upon the fears of a multitude of parents, and suggesting self-destruction to an extremely suggestible part of the population. . . .

The statistician's statement had the effect, at the height of this hysteria, of a bucket of cold water. But the press could not with

dignity, or would not, stop discussion of student suicides. The more self-respecting newspapers stopped speaking of them as an epidemic or wave. Had the ballyhoo been permitted to continue, there would indeed have been a wave. And it would have come as the result of a circulation-building stunt.

Fallacy of Illogical Relationship.—Perhaps the most frequent source of mental confusion in reaching conclusions is failure to trace logical relationships. A few years ago, a young man on a certain large university campus had become somewhat wrought up over what seemed to him a hopelessly deplorable condition among his fellow students. To test out his theory, he one morning dressed himself up queerly, in top hat, wing collar, and bow tie, and proceeded to loiter about the campus to see what would happen. The next day he wrote a scathing denunciation of the tendency to conformity on the part of the student body, whom he scornfully denominated as "sheep," all abjectly "following the leader" in matters of thought and dress. His evidence was that when he had appeared the day before dressed contrary to the prevailing mode, he had attracted an undue amount of attention from campus folk, many of whom had actually smilingly stopped to look him over. This he interpreted to mean that the students on this campus were narrow-minded about dress, intolerant of any variation from the standard styles; and from this evidence he advanced to the further deduction that in general thinking the students collectively lacked individuality and independence, had become, in fact, standardized until all were of one colorless piece.

There were naturally heated rejoinders to this criticism from members of the student body. Some flatly denied the conclusion, some made fun of the method of gaining evidence, but the more intelligent simply pointed out that even though there might be truth in the conclusions, there was really no logical connection between the evidence used and these conclusions. Here was a man

who had deliberately dressed up in a fashion to make a show of himself, as if for a fraternity pre-initiation stunt; he was not even going about his business in an unobtrusive way, but was purposely loitering to attract attention. One can always excite a certain curiosity by acting like a freak; but that proves nothing as to the student mind. Thus the keener reasoners easily detected and exposed the faulty causal connections in the arguments of this young reformer.

Examples of such pseudo-logic occur, unfortunately, even in the most respectable circles—political, educational, journalistic. To cite one notable instance: A few years ago a British dramatic critic was detailed by the *London Times* to visit America, and especially Hollywood, to investigate and analyze the moving picture situation. The results were a series of six articles in the *Times* presenting an argument already twice referred to in this chapter, but which will bear still further remark. Here among other things, the writer explained the low æsthetic and moral plane of the movies, as he had gotten the facts, chiefly through interviews with the big producers. And this was the line of reasoning: In America there is an immense territory lying between the enlightened Eastern states and the Rocky Mountains known to movie folk as the "hinterland," or "hick" territory. Now the people inhabiting this section of the country are, as the word "hick" would imply, deplorably low in the cultural scale, shockingly depraved and Philistine in tastes, and will brook no entertainment but of a corresponding order. The naturally high-minded and æsthetically-cultivated (*sic*) Hollywood producer would be only too happy to ignore the demands of these "hicks" and supply only pictures of the highest artistic merit, such as the better classes in America (those residing in New York and Boston, presumably) would appreciate and such as would meet the approval of English and Continental taste. But, alas, even the most

lofty-minded, most disinterested movie producer must live. He creates his pictures at a great financial outlay; he must make expenses or quit. Now not only is the cultural state of the great American "hinterland" hopelessly depraved, but the people here are a very numerous people, and they make up a large percentage of the total potential movie audience. Consequently, however regretfully, large concessions must be made to this barbarous "hick" taste regardless of how much æsthetically the rest of the world (such as east-side New York, waterfront Boston, west-side London, and lower Edinburgh!) may suffer.

It so happened that the writer of this chapter, who it may be remarked is thoroughly familiar with Middle Western life and tastes, was, at the time these articles appeared, traveling in England, and had just been seeing a good deal of Continental cities. And one thing in particular that had struck his attention was the evident similarity in taste and enthusiasm for movies the world over. In Genoa and Rome, in Lucerne, in Strassburg, Coblenz, Cologne, Brussels, in Paris, London, and Edinburgh, ever and again appeared the highly advertised, highly patronized American film, frequently something that had been shown at home long before. And particularly noticeable had been the preference of London and Edinburgh crowds for the American "cinema"—the long waiting queues before the Holborn and Kingsway theaters, the packed entrances on Prince Street houses. Moreover, the writer was familiar with the moving picture "palaces" of American cities from New York to Los Angeles, and on his return home took particular pains to observe audiences at several Boston houses, where it seemed to him there was manifested an especially marked keenness for the same sort of cheaply sensational sex melodrama Edinburgh and London folk had flocked to see.

The whole fallacy in the *Times* articles is at once apparent. In addition to neglecting the evidence for what

one may call a sort of world average taste, which the facts just stated demonstrate, the *Times* investigator had fallen an easy victim to a prevailing "hokum,"—fostered by such writers as Ezra Pound, Mr. Mencken, and Sinclair Lewis,—that mid-western America is inhabited by a horde of ignorant yokels, who, because of the influence of their great numbers, may in a democratic society such as ours be held blamable for all that is retrogressive and mean in politics, religion, art, and what not. The moving picture operators, ignoring the fact that, honestly reckoning the great masses of foreign elements in our large cities, there is a far greater proportion of ignorance in New York and Boston than in Iowa and Nebraska, had capitalized a popular prejudice and had sent the easily-convinced Britisher home with the comfortable assurance that all which is needed to regenerate the "cinema" industry is to educate the yokels of the vast American hinterland—the movie industry itself is ready. There is some truth in that conclusion, to be sure; but the whole truth would be that before satisfactory results can occur, the average taste of the rest of the world must be likewise educated out of its "hick" tendencies. It is not that the average mid-western taste is to be absolved from the charge of depravity; it is only that the average taste almost everywhere is open to a like charge. Here is a case of faulty cause and effect argument, involving also such other fallacies as half-truth, prejudice, and popular misconception.

Opposed to the parlous logic and the unfounded conclusion of the untrained or careless and irresponsible is the direct close reasoning of the man who has really learned to think straight. This man is, first of all, of a skeptical turn of mind. He does not swallow ready-made argument and conclusion as a sick man takes a sugar-coated pill—without examination. Instead, he probes beneath

appearances and analyzes what he finds for himself. Such a man has trained himself to follow intricate threads of thought; he has disciplined himself to search out facts and to trace their implications; to untangle true from false relationships, sifting out real causes and real reasons from prejudice and misconception and the superficially apparent. Thus, it becomes one of the ends of education to bring indulgence in superficial reasoning and false premise into disrepute by making impossible the easy acceptance of such fallacious argument as is illustrated in the foregoing examples. The educated mind should do its own clear-sighted thinking, and should in turn be able to penetrate the deceptive veneer of specious reasoning in others.

EXERCISES IN ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING

1. In *The Forum* magazine for September, 1925, there was an article by Madison Grant entitled "America for the Americans," in which the writer defended the Immigration Act of 1924. The following month Franz Boas replied to Mr. Grant's argument in an article entitled "This Nordic Nonsense." Find these arguments in the bound volume of *The Forum,* No. LXXIV, and study them carefully.

(a) Do the two men meet on a point at issue? If so, what is it? If not, how do the issues as stated by the disputants differ? Write out a statement of the point, or points, at issue.

(b) Make a brief of each argument.

(c) Can you state the line of reasoning in a syllogism? Try to put the conclusion and main arguments into an enthymeme.

(d) Write a summary of each article.

(e) Criticize these arguments from the point of view of presentation of fact and logical reasoning to an inevitable conclusion.

2. In your reading for the next week, include the editorials in your daily paper and essays in at least two such magazines as *Harper's, The Forum, The American Mercury, The Atlantic, The North American Review, The New Republic, The Nation,* and so

forth. What proportion of this reading is argumentative? Analyze the argument you find in at least two articles or editorials:

(a) From the point of view of basis of appeal—

(1) Presumption
(2) Common sense and common experience
(3) Facts
(4) Logic
    (a) Cause and effect
    (b) Deduction
    (c) Induction

(b) From the point of view of success in convincing or persuading.

3. Write informal arguments on either side of questions suggested in the following statements. Use concrete illustration to support your stand wherever possible:

A certain freedom to go wrong is essential in a University, where men are learning, not to obey, but to choose. (Raleigh)

Nations are cattle—it's persons that I like. (Raleigh)

University education should therefore be regarded as a privilege for special ability, and those who possess the skill but no money should be maintained at the public expense during their course. (Bertrand Russell)

God's in His Heaven
All's right with the world. (Browning)

If you renounce poets, renounce civilization. (Victor Hugo)

There is in this world no real delight—but exchange of ideas in conversation. (Dr. Johnson)

Books without the knowledge of life are useless; for what should good books teach but the art of living? To study manners, however, only in coffee-houses, is more than equally imperfect; the minds of men who acquire no

solid learning, and only exist on the daily forage that they pick up by running about, and snatching what drops from their neighbors as ignorant as themselves, will never ferment into any knowledge valuable or durable; but like the light wine we drink in hot countries, please for the moment though incapable of keeping. (Dr. Johnson)

4. Read the following; is it true or not true? Write what you think. Let's have evidence one way or the other—instances of definite individuals in life, fiction, or history who prove or disprove these statements.

> What I reproach in women, above all, is their need of *poetisation,* of forcing poetry into things. A man may be in love with his laundress, but will know that she is stupid, though he may not enjoy her company the less. But if a woman loves her inferior, he is straightway an unrecognised genius, a superior soul, or the like. And to such a degree does this innate disposition to see crooked prevail, that women can perceive neither truth when they encounter it nor beauty where it really exists. This fault is the true cause of the deceptions of which they so often complain. To require oranges of apple trees is a common malady with them. (Flaubert)

5. In an argumentative paper not over three hundred words long, discuss some phase of the ideas presented in the following summary from the *Literary Digest:*

> POIRET VS. THE WOMEN—American women have seemed to stage a Waterloo for Monsieur Paul Poiret, the acknowledged king of the art of women's clothes. He comes to us with complaints that they will not change their taste. Having put them in shorts, he now wants longs. But the women seem to have departed from his leadership, and the Philadelphia *Record* analyzes his plight:
>
> "One of the oldest battles known to the fair sex has been that eternally waged between fashion and comfort. Of old, styles were notoriously uncomfortable. The

smart clothes of the day were either too tight or too loose in the wrong places, or they were too long, and in other ways interfered with the free movement of the wearer. . . .

"But of late women have desired more comfortable garments, threatening disobedience to the tenets of style. They have gained ground, and to-day's garb is about as free from distortions as could be. Clothing is not too tight, too narrow, too bulky, nor does it scratch, speaking, of course, from a feminine point of view. Perhaps it does err on the ground of going to the other extreme beyond the actual requirements of comfort, but that is a characteristic of all rebellions.

"Styles in the last five years have not changed greatly, at least in that time no radically different garments have been seriously adopted by womankind. Very probably the reason is that they have at last found garments which may be worn without distress, either local or general. . . .

"Not only have present fashions had a long run, but a still longer one is predicted, because they are based on sound principles. Of course, they are becoming, but so is every fashion of the moment, and other generations claimed an outstanding beauty for their own modes, not without cause."

6. Does the following statement from Emerson incline you to argument? If so, write a brief paper setting forth your ideas on the subject:

> Is not this absurd, that the whole liberal talent of this country should be directed in its best years on studies which lead to nothing?

7. In reply to Mr. Thrale's enthusiastic comment on beauty in nature Samuel Johnson once declared, "Never heed such nonsense: a blade of grass is always a blade of grass, whether in one country or another: let us if we do talk, talk about something; men and women are my subjects of inquiry; let us see how these differ from those we have left behind."

Do you prefer nature to people, or people to nature? Explain and defend your stand.

8. A short while ago, Mr. Leonard Wolfe, literary editor of the London *Nation,* discussing Longfellow as a poet, issued a challenge to any reader of *The Nation* to unearth from Longfellow's verse a single line of real poetry. Mr. James Douglas, editor of *The Sunday Express* (London), accepted the challenge, not only quoting what he considered good poetry from Longfellow, but presenting an argument for Longfellow as a poet. Study the extract from this argument given below, and in the light of what you know about Longfellow and poetry in general, write an argument either attacking or supporting the stand taken by Mr. Douglas.

> All great poets have written yards of hopelessly bad verse, because all poets write too much and burn too little. The pedants and the parasites preserve and publish their worst work together with their best. It is not surprising that the masses of counterfeit coin drive the good coin out of circulation. The ordinary reader shirks the drudgery of sifting and separating the gold from the lead, the silver from the nickel. . . .
>
> For my part I hate anthologies and anthologists. They remind me of museums and mummies and their curators. I like to dig out my own nuggets and wash out my own gold dust, for I enjoy the sting of the unexpected, the stab of the unforeseen.
>
> But most of us are born with a thoroughly bad taste for bad poetry, and we seldom take the trouble to acquire a good taste for good poetry. Our imagination remains undeveloped by adventure and experiment. We are incapable of enjoying what the poets call pure poetry, of which there is very little in literature.
>
> Longfellow moved the heart of the common people, and they read him gladly because they understood his simple common tales and songs. His taste was terrible, but so is theirs. His moralizings were pathetic, but so are theirs. We may laugh and jeer at "Excelsior" and "The Psalm of Life," "Evangeline," and "Hiawatha," but that is because our taste has been educated and his style is

out-moded. We forget that he wrote for a primitive age that loved the didactic, the rhetorical, and the pseudo-picturesque.

There are still millions of simple souls who are not beyond the naïve stage reached by Longfellow. In our jargon we call them lowbrows. But the real defense of Longfellow is that he provided lowbrow poetry for the multitude of lowbrows. He was the common poet of the common people whose ears can not catch the higher harmonies. He thought as they think. He felt as they feel. He was the Ford of poetry.

. . . . .

Let us not despise the primers of poetry. They may lead the people into the Promised Land by way of the wilderness. I believe that every lover of poetry goes through a period of evolution in taste. It is a long way from Longfellow to the great poets, but it is at least a way. In his verse there is a weak dilution of poetry, but even diluted poetry is good for poetic babes.

There may be no pure and absolute poetry in such lines as

> The air is full of farewells to the dying
> And mournings for the dead.

But such passages may create a palate for sublimer and loftier music. The lover of Longfellow may progress, ripen, and mature. He is not past praying for.

The truth is that poetry in our time tends to become the property of a priesthood, the monopoly of a hierarchy, the guarded secret of a sect. It loses itself in metaphysics. It becomes esoteric. Its language is unintelligible. It is a cult, not a living river.

There is a gulf between the poets and the people. Hence the haughty derision heaped upon Longfellow by our intelligentsia. He is beneath their subtlety, although his simple rimes once ran like wildfire through the minds of the masses.

I submit that the tenth-rate poets are useful as sign-posts, on the poetic highway. They point the way to the pil-

grims. The lover of Longfellow may hew his way to the high bards who sing the high songs. An attempt to murder Longfellow is like an attempt to murder the alphabet.

9. (a) Anything can be bought on credit these days. Our newspapers are filled with advertisements fishing for the "unearned dollar." People are invited to buy everything from real estate and furniture to garden hose, automobiles, and jewelry, and pay in the future. Write arguments for or against this policy: first from the standpoint of the dealer; second, from the standpoint of the investor.

(b) Several magazine articles have been written on this subject in the past few years. Try to find some of these, for supporting evidence and testimony.

10. Develop the following in the form of an argument:

> Sense is satisfied with less and simpler food when sense and spirit are fed together, and the feast of the loaves and fishes is spread for us anew. If it be important for a state to educate its lower classes, so is it for us personally to instruct, elevate, and refine our senses, the lower classes of our private body-politic, which, if left to their own brute instincts, will disorder or destroy the whole commonwealth with flaming insurrection.
>
> —LOWELL, *Leaves From My Journal.*

11. Mr. Stanley Vestal is the author of an article in *The American Mercury* for January, 1928 (Volume XIII, p. 81), entitled "The Wooden Indian," the purpose of which is to correct certain glaring popular misconceptions about the Indian. Study this for methods in refutation. How does the author set out to correct error? Is he convincing?

12. In an article in *The Atlantic Monthly* for February, 1928, entitled "The Price of Fur," Lucy Furman presents a case against current practices in the fur industry, especially with relation to the use of steel traps. Study this article as an example of argument. What methods are used? What proportion of the appeal is to the intellect, what proportion to the emotions? Is the result convincing?

13. In *The American Magazine* for February, 1928, Honoré

Willsie Morrow gives evidence for the truth of the following statements:

Lincoln was not a good rail splitter.
He was not, as President, commonly dressed in only badly fitting frock-coat suits and rusty high hat.
He was religious.
He knew many poems, and not only one, and quoted verse widely.
He was not a teller of obscene stories.
He was a man of temper.
He was happily married.

What does all this taken together, tend to prove? Write out the logical conclusions.

14. (a) Make a list of five propositions for arguments.

(b) Make a list of five propositions in each of which a definition for at least one of its terms must be taken from the dictionary.

(c) Make a list of five propositions in each of which a definition should make clear not so much the broad meaning of a term as the particular application of it.

15. (a) Give three examples of assertion from your personal experience. Then show how two of those assertions might possibly have been supported by convincing evidence.

(b) Give an example of testimonial evidence.

(c) Also one of circumstantial evidence.

16. (a) Give an example of testimony which is of little value because of the bad character of the witness; one of little value because the witness has a strong motive for dishonesty; one of little value because the witness is dull; one that may be weakened because of prejudice in favor of family or friends, of church, of school, of political party, of country; an example of inexpert testimony on a point for which expert testimony is needed.

(b) Give two examples of fallacies arising from confused definitions.

17. Give two examples of the fallacy of mistaking sequence in time for cause and effect.

18. Frame a proposition upon one of the "burning questions of the day," and then write an argument in which you employ chiefly refutation.

19. Give an example of refutation in the form of a brief.

20. Give examples, from your reading, of persuasive appeals directed in each separate instance respectively to elementary feelings, such as desire to preserve life, self-interest, the sense of personal honor, family affection, patriotism, admiration of heroism, generosity, mercy, opposition to oppression, love.

21. Phrase a proposition regarding tenement districts, or literary men and government pensions, or the negro and education, or the codification of the common law in the United States,—and then write a short deductive argument upon the proposition.

22. Treat one of the three following propositions deductively: (a) Conversation is the greatest of the fine arts; (b) When good men enter politics, corruption in that field will go out of fashion; (c) Fiction has no right to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality.

23. Write an essay upon the subject "Effective Argument" in which you make use of as many of the following quotations as possible. You will find that some can be used as fundamental truths, some as testimony, some as illustration. (a) Eloquence is not in the man; it is in the assembly. (William Pitt) (b) No man is ever inspired by the occasion; I never was. (Daniel Webster) (c) With ordinary minds, such as much the greater part of the world are, 'tis the suitableness, not the evidence, of a truth that makes it to be accepted. And it is seldom that anything practically convinces a man that does not please him first. (Robert South) (d) With most audiences, a thing needs to be said twice; once to open their heads, and once to fill them. (E. E. Slosson) (e) To convince a man against his will is hard, but to please him against his will is justly pronounced by Dryden to be above the reach of human abilities. (Samuel Johnson) (f) If you want to be a good public speaker whenever anyone is fool enough to ask you to speak you be fool enough to do it. (Edward Everett Hale)

(g) Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
About it and about; but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.
(Omar Khayyám)

(h) In youth, said his father, I took to the law,
And argued each case with my wife;
And the muscular strength it gave to my jaw
Has lasted the rest of my life.

(Lewis Carroll)

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Philosophers say that the test of truth is agreement with the whole of experience. To what degree should argument be based upon this idea?

2. What is meant by "the pattern of argument"?

3. Of what specific value is an "agile mind" to the arguer?

4. What is the difference between judgment and opinion?

5. "Argument uses denotation rather than connotation." To what extent is this statement true?

6. Archibald Spafforth in his treatise on *Radical Fallibilities of the Human Brain* calculated that the probability of any given theory being right is as 1 to 241,743. What bearing does this have upon argumentation?

7. What is meant by "clear and logical articulation"?

8. Under what conditions may the argumentative appeal be to the "whole man"?

9. Is there ever warrant for appeal to emotion only?

10. There is emotional wisdom as well as fact and thought wisdom.

11. What is our attitude toward a scientist who attempts to influence by his manner?

12. Of what value would work for a time upon a newspaper be to one who wished to become a good debater and writer of argumentative articles?

13. The value of a general notebook.

14. The value of writing daily.

15. The value of reading "everything."

16. The value of having a "personal philosophy."

17. The value of wide acquaintance with people.

18. The value of coolness of manner both in speaking and in writing.

19. Make a list of the coincidences which you have heard mistaken for cause and effect within the period of one week.

20. Examine Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum* for examples of making assertions and then later referring to them as evidence.

21. Name fifteen books, each of which was written at approximately the same time that a decisive military battle occurred. Which, if any, has proved of more worth than its contemporary "decisive battle"?

22. Is the following statement true? How far does its entire or partial truth or falsity affect the argumentative speaker or writer in America?

> America's vulgarism is due, among other things, to the profound and irreversible social revolution, by which, in order that all may be fed, the essences of cultural nutriment have been diluted.

23. What does the phrase "The Great Sports Myth" suggest to you?

24. In Edgar A. Mowrer's *The American World,* page 54, occurs the following: "I remember the day when, possibly under the influence of Euclid, I stumbled on the following syllogism: Since (1) education is a fine thing and (2) most of it has been produced by foreigners, then (3) these foreigners cannot be inferior to us who have no education of our own." Is that a valid syllogism?

Chapter XIII

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

After reading a canto of Spenser, two or three days ago, to an old lady between seventy and eighty years of age, she said that I had been showing her a gallery of pictures.—POPE, quoted in JOSEPH SPENCE, *Anecdotes.*

For an example, I see Baucis and Philemon as perfectly before me as if some ancient painter had drawn them; and all the pilgrims in the Canterbury Tales, their humours, their features, and the very dress, as distinctly as if I had supped with them at the Tabard of Southwark.—DRYDEN, *Preface to the Fables.*

I

THE NATURE OF DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION usually occurs in narrative, and is incidental to the story, though occasionally the emphasis is reversed and the description is written for its own sake, with only a thread of narrative to bind its parts together. In strictly scientific documents, of course, as in a surveyor's description of a piece of land, the narrative vanishes. But the purpose in such cases is expository and need hardly concern us in this chapter. Description is to narration what the special senses are to the body. The eyes and ears, the nose and palate, the skin and muscles bring to the brain tidings from the outside world to be translated into perceptions of sight, sound, taste, and smell, of touch, temperature, and weight; just so, descriptive writing supplies the stuff out of which the reader constructs for himself concrete mental images of men and women and houses and landscapes, of the sound of voices and the scent of flowers. Description thus gives

life and reality to the imaginary world of books; it fills it with form and color and beauty that would otherwise be absent, and it paints a background and a setting in which definite figures whom we see and hear as in the flesh, live and act before us. It is clear then that a narrative writer who wishes to present convincing pictures of life must have a fair amount of skill in description.

The genius of description is to catch in words the dominant sense appeal of the object. Its end is to depict a thing, a person, a scene, or a type, in its peculiarity, as distinguished from all other things, scenes, persons, or types. A writer who can describe well is one who can transmit to the mind of the reader images—visual, auditory, olfactory—in such perfection as to create or evoke a totality of effect similar to that produced by the object itself.

In his essay on the poet Thompson, William Hazlitt admirably sets forth the ideal effects in successful description. Hazlitt ranks Thompson as "the best of our descriptive poets," for the reason that, though others have been equal to him in marking the peculiar features and curious details of objects, "no one has yet come up to him in giving the sum total of their effects, their varying influences on the mind."

Thompson, says Hazlitt, does not so much give the minutiæ of a landscape as describe

> . . . the vivid impression which the whole makes upon his own imagination; and thus [he] transfers the same unbroken, unimpaired impression to the imagination of his readers. . . . Nature in his descriptions is seen growing around us, fresh and lusty as in itself. We feel the effect of the atmosphere, its humidity or clearness, its heat or cold, the glow of summer, the gloom of winter, the tender promise of the spring, the full overshadowing foliage, the declining pomp and deepening tints of autumn. He transports us to the scorching heat of vertical suns, or plunges us into the chilling horrors and desolation of the frozen zone. We hear the snow

drifting against the broken casement without, and see the fire blazing on the hearth within. . . . In a word, he describes not to the eye alone, but to the other senses, and to the whole man.

—*The Spirit of the Age and Other Essays.*

II

Interpretation in Description, and Singleness of Effect

If description is to fulfill these demands, presenting the sum total of the effects of persons or objects in their influences on the mind, it must attempt more than mere photography or portraiture; it must also *interpret*. Portraiture, (that is, a faithful presentation of the physical appearance of an object), may indeed be a considerable part of a good description, but it can at most be only the skeleton, not the *soul*. A merely objective description of a thing, without reference to its effects on the mind of the observer, may be ever so correct mathematically or geographically, and yet be a failure from the literary point of view. Even when such a description occurs in a story or a poem its function is really expository and scientific, not literary. It is only when details are so presented as to interpret the essential character of the object described that we have literary description. And this is true of landscapes and sounds and smells as well as of persons. For all landscapes worth describing have character of some sort, and so have animals and buildings and other things. Successful description catches and portrays this character. As Trader Horn says, "To paint a lion minus its thoughts is not much more of an achievement than this so-called still life—couple of lemons and some kitchen pots on a table."

Good descriptive writers have always instinctively painted scenes and people with their "thoughts." Thus

Homer gave us the gloomy, wrathful Achilles and the ominous, terrifying Scylla and Charybdis, and Dante the mournful scenes in his *Inferno*. In our earliest English epic *Beowulf,* descriptions of the dark forests and the dank misty fens and marshlands suggest the character these places bore in the minds of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors; and the mystery, and terror, and fascination the sea held for these people is likewise shown in some of the finest descriptive nature poetry in our language. This same quality runs through the work of our earliest great prose writer, Malory, who often in the briefest passages deftly sets before us scenes and characters colored with vivid, unforgettable personality; and it exists as one of the distinctive marks of such of our later masters as Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy, and Joseph Conrad. In fact, it is safe to say that wherever we find great descriptive writers we find power in interpretative presentation.

A second quality of good description, so closely related to interpretation, indeed, that one cannot be discussed without reference to the other, is what is known as Singleness of Effect. Successful description not only conveys the "thoughts," the character, of its object, but it presents a central impression of that character. To one who looks intently, a person, place, or thing will almost invariably convey some dominant general impression of silence and peace, or of movement and unrest, of cheerfulness or gloom, of beauty, neatness, well-being, or of ugliness, disorder, misery. Or this impression may present itself in a more physical aspect—in the form of a comparison, for instance. The contours of a place may resemble a horseshoe, or suggest a bent fish-hook, a half-moon, a dome, or a great roof. Similarly, the sight of an individual may call to mind a centaur, a satyr, or a Gorgon. In each case we have a dominant impression, and, at the same time, an interpretation. The observer sees the thing in a certain way, from a single point of view. Having experienced

this dominant impression, from either an actual or an imaginative object, the veracious writer will contrive to pass it on to his reader as the significant element of whatever he is describing. If he succeeds, his description will have singleness of effect.

We can perhaps best understand how good writers have been successful in this by studying a number of representative descriptions.

Mention has been made of the descriptive effects to be found in our old English epic *Beowulf*. An illustration will show the power with which the writer here presented unified impressions: The meriwif, mother of the man-slaying monster Grendel, has attacked Heorot and carried off an unhappy thane to her lair under the sea. The place where she has disappeared is fittingly described. Darkly gloomy and awesome it is, indeed.

> Then went the child of earls
> O'er stony steeps, strait ways, and single tracks,
> By unproved paths, headlands precipitous,
> Through many a cave of monsters of the sea.
>
> . . . . .
>
> . . . when suddenly he saw
> The hill-trees overhang the hoary stone;
> The joyless woods; beneath, the waters lay
> Blood-red and restless. . . .
> The waters seethed with blood and boiling gore,
> The warriors gazed thereon, the horn gave forth
> An eager war-song ever and anon.
> The heroes sat them by the bank, and saw
> Monsters mysterious within the mere,
> Dragons, and Nixies, and great water-snakes;
> Along the headland slope the sea-beasts lay,
> Which made at morning time a gloomy path
> Across the sail-track, beasts and serpent kin;
> They rushed away in rage and vengeful wrath,
> Scared by the screaming trumpet-voice of war.
>
> —GUMMERE, *The Oldest English Epic.*

Another instance of interpretative description with admirable centrality of effect occurs in one of our earliest collections of stories.

The fierce countenance of Corineus was not less terrible because it was furrowed by age, and set round with strong white hair, and a beard like a trail of autumn cloud; the muscles stood out like serpents from his bare arms, and his loose garment of Tyrian purple left to view a broad patch of the shaggy breast against which, as in a vice, he had crushed the ribs of the monster Gog-magog. Such as Corineus was, such were his followers: Shaggy-browed, iron-sinewed, ample in stature, resolute in purpose, and ruthless in action; they waited but a sign from their chief to dash like wolves upon the homesteads of the peaceful subjects of the king, or to tear him to pieces in his own halls.[1]

Personal description in which a total effect of salient physical appearance and a leading trait in personality are given is illustrated in the following from Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native:*

. . . a firm-standing man of middle age, who kept each corner of his crescent-shaped mouth drawn back into his cheek, as if to do away with any suspicion of mirthfulness which might erroneously have attached to him.

Equally effective is Galsworthy's brief description of young Jon Forsyte:

Soames stared after them. That boy was good-looking, with a Forsyte chin, and eyes deep-grey, deep in; but with something sunny, like a glass of old sherry spilled over him; his smile perhaps, his hair.

A college student aptly described a visiting English poet, whom he had just heard lecture, as "a timid, dry

[1] GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, *Esyllt and Sabrina* (in *Historia Britonum*, 1132-35). This story translated is to be found in CLARK and LIEBER'S *Great Short Stories of the World.*

little chap, dressed like an American business man." And then he continued in more detail, "He has thinnish dark hair parted in the middle over a gravely-set face, wearing an expression of slight anxiety; a sensitive mouth, held in restraint against a tendency to quiver a little, capable, however, of relaxing into friendly, wrinkled smiles."

In these descriptions of people there is a world of suggestion as to personality. It would be quite possible from these few words to write an interesting character sketch of each man portrayed.

To most of us the mailman is a pleasant enough fellow. We regard him as a kindly, beneficent morning visitor whose duties as bearer of our most intimate and confidential messages establishes him in a unique relationship of sympathy and friendly regard. But in *The House with the Green Shutters,* George Douglas Brown presents a postman in quite a different character. Here he is guileful and repulsive, and is shown to be so by a very few well-selected details which suggest much more than they actually express:

> The post was a square-built, bandy-legged little man, with a bristle of grizzled hair about his twisted mouth, perpetually cocking up an ill-bred face in the sight of Heaven. Physically and morally he had in him something both of the Scotch terrier and the London sparrow—the shagginess of the one, the cocked eye of the other, the one's snarling temper, the other's assured impudence.

George Eliot's novels are full of fine descriptive passages. Few, however, stir the imagination more pleasantly than the picture of cool, fragrant purity in Mrs. Poyser's dairy:

> The dairy was certainly worth looking at: it was a scene to sicken for with a sort of calenture in hot and dusty streets—such coolness, such purity, such fresh fragrance of new-pressed cheese, of firm butter, of wooden vessels perpetually bathed in pure water;

such soft coloring of red earthenware and creamy surfaces, brown wood and polished tin, grey limestone, and rich orange-red rust on the iron weights and hooks and hinges. But one gets only a confused notion of these details when they surround a distractingly pretty girl of seventeen, standing on little pattens and rounding her dimpled arm to lift a pound of butter out of the scale.

—*Adam Bede.*

Stendhal secured singleness of effect when he described Mérimée as "a young man in a gray frock-coat, very ugly, and with a turned-up nose. . . . This young man had something insolent and extremely unpleasant about him. His eyes, small and without expression, had always the same look, and this look was ill-natured."

This description is notable for the convincing suggestion of ugliness and ill-nature secured through a minimum of detail. There are really few features of the man described; yet how adequately these images illustrate and reinforce the general impression of ugliness.

In the following, every detail contributes to intensify the dominant impression of the misery of men marching to battle on a sultry afternoon in France. It is worth noting how effectively each new detail heightens the suggestion of the power of terrific, stifling humidity to make human beings compelled to labor through it indescribably wretched.

No wind moved across the lonely wheatland; the bearded stalks waved not at all, and the sun-drenched air was hot and dead. Sweat made muddy runnels through the thick white dust that masked the faces of the men. Conversation languished; what was said was in profane monosyllables. Clouds came up, and there were showers of rain, with hot sunshine between. Uniforms steamed after each shower, and thirst became a torture. The man who had the vin blanc in his canteen fell out and was quite ill. "Hikin'—in—a dam'—Turkish bath ——"

—Thomason, *Fix Bayonets.*

In the following extract from George Eliot, the first phrase suggests the dominant impression; the paragraph as a whole is a striking interpretation of a scene:

Plenty of life there! though this is the drowsiest time of the year, just before hay-harvest; and it is the drowsiest time of the day, too, for it is close upon three by the sun, and it is half-past three by Mrs. Poyser's handsome eight-day clock. But there is always a stronger sense of life when the sun is brilliant after rain; and now he is pouring down his beams, and making sparkles among the wet straw, and lighting up every patch of vivid green moss on the red tiles of the cow-shed, and turning even the muddy water that is hurrying along the channel to the drain into a mirror for the yellow-billed ducks, who are seizing the opportunity of getting a drink with as much body in it as possible. There is quite a concert of noises; the great bull-dog, chained against the stable, is thrown into furious exasperation by the unwary approach of a cock too near the mouth of his kennel, and sends forth a thundering bark, which is answered by two fox-hounds shut up in the opposite cow-house; the old top-knotted hens scratching with their chicks among the straw, set up a sympathetic croaking as the discomfited cock joins them; a sow with her brood, all very muddy as to the legs, and curled as to the tail, throws in some deep staccato notes; our friends the calves are bleating from the home croft; and, under all, a fine ear discerns the continuous hum of human voices.

—*Adam Bede.*

In each of the last two descriptions there are vivid and unforgettable images, but neither one exists so much for the mere picture as for the dominant impression. The details are selected chiefly for the definite end of creating, in one case, an expression of human misery; in the other, an impression of the stir of life. In many cases description goes even further: its sole end is to create atmospheric effects or moods. This is what we sometimes call impressionistic description. In *The Christmas Carol, The Cricket on the Hearth,* and other tales and novels of

Dickens one constantly finds descriptive-narrative passages whose aim is to convey feelings of good cheer or gloom and sadness. In Poe, such a story as *The Fall of the House of Usher* presents an atmosphere of dissolution and decay. Wilkie Collins constantly reinforces his ominous or otherwise thrilling scenes in a similar manner, as one may find by reading his *Woman in White*. Hardy uses this method almost to excess, though there are certain splendid exemplifications of it—one of the best is the description of the heath the day Mrs. Yeobright dies on her return from Clym's. And of course no English writer has introduced atmospheric description into his narrative more consistently and more successfully than Joseph Conrad.

There is space for but brief examples of the type of description we are here talking about. The first is from Dickens, and in it is conveyed the delightful holiday mood and the captivating sense of rapid motion of one bound for home and friends in a swiftly-running, joyously-rocking stage coach:

> These were all foreshadowings of London, Tom thought, as he sat upon the box, and looked about him. Such a coachman, and such a guard, never could have existed between Salisbury and any other place. The coach was none of your steady-going, yokel coaches, but a swaggering, rakish, dissipated London coach; up all night, and lying by all day, and leading a devil of a life. It cared no more for Salisbury than if it had been a hamlet. It rattled noisily through the best streets, defied the Cathedral, took the worst corners sharpest, went cutting in everywhere, making everything get out of its way: and spun along the open country-road, blowing a lively defiance out of its key-bugle, as its last glad parting legacy.
>
> It was a charming evening. Mild and bright. And even with the weight upon his mind which arose out of the immensity and uncertainty of London, Tom could not resist the captivating sense of rapid motion through the pleasant air. The four grays skimmed

along, as if they liked it quite as well as Tom did; the bugle was in as high spirits as the grays; the coachman chimed in sometimes with his voice; the wheels hummed cheerfully in unison; the brass work on the harness was an orchestra of little bells; and thus, as they went clinking, jingling, rattling smoothly on, the whole concern, from the buckles of the leaders' coupling-reins to the handle of the hind boot, was one great instrument of music.

Yoho, past hedges, gates, and trees; past cottages and barns, and people going home from work. Yoho, past donkey-chaises, drawn aside into the ditch, and empty carts with rampant horses, whipped up at a bound upon the little watercourse, and held by struggling carters close to the five-barred gate, until the coach had passed the narrow turning in the road. Yoho, by churches dropped down by themselves in quiet nooks with rustic burial-grounds about them, where the graves were green and daisies sleep—for it is evening—on the bosoms of the dead. Yoho, past streams, in which the cattle cool their feet, and where the rushes grow; past paddock-fences, farms, and rick-yards; past last year's stacks, cut, slice by slice, away, and showing, in the waning light, like ruined gables, old and brown. Yoho, down the pebbly dip, and through the merry water-splash, and up at a canter to the level road again. Yoho! Yoho.

—*Martin Chuzzlewit.*

In one of his best stories Conrad portrays the sense of uneasy isolation of a nervously sensitive young sea captain on his first ship who, knowing neither his craft nor the men on it, is alone with his secret other self,—*The Secret Sharer*—his only companion and confidant. In his opening paragraphs, written in his finest descriptive vein, the author creates just the atmosphere of silent cleavage from the world such a situation demands.

On my right hand there were lines of fishing-stakes resembling a mysterious system of half-submerged bamboo fences, incomprehensible in its division of the domain of tropical fishes, and crazy of aspect as if abandoned forever by some nomad tribe of fishermen now gone to the other end of the ocean; for there was no sign of human habitation as far as the eye could reach. To the left a

group of barren islets, suggesting ruins of stone walls, towers, and blockhouses, had its foundations set in a blue sea that itself looked solid, so still and stable did it lie beneath my feet; even the track of light from the westering sun shone smoothly, without that animated glitter which tells of an imperceptible ripple. . . . Here and there gleams as of a few scattered pieces of silver marked the windings of the great river; and on the nearest of them, just within the bar, the tug steaming right in to the land became lost to my sight, hull and funnel and masts, as though the impassive earth had swallowed her up without an effort, without a tremor. My eye followed the light cloud of her smoke, now here, now there, above the plain, according to the devious curves of the stream, but always fainter and farther away, till I lost it at last behind the mitre-shaped hill of the great pagoda. And then I was left alone with my ship, anchored at the head of the Gulf of Siam.

The second paragraph is especially "impressionistic":

She floated at the starting point of a long journey, very still in an immense stillness, the shadows of her spars flung far to the eastward by the setting sun. At that moment I was alone on her decks. There was not a sound in her—and around us nothing moved, nothing lived, not a canoe on the water, not a bird in the air, not a cloud in the sky. In this breathless pause at the threshold of a long passage we seemed to be measuring our fitness for a long and arduous enterprise, the appointed task of both our existences to be carried out, far from all human eyes, with only sky and sea for spectators and for judges.

—*The Secret Sharer.*

The examples given thus far have all been based upon impressions received through the sense of sight. But the other senses also furnish materials for interpretative description.

Sounds, for instance, when presented at their best, always have character. In *The House with the Green Shutters,* George Douglas Brown describes sounds with a vivid interpretative turn. Thus when the delirious John hurls a jug at an imaginary pursuer and strikes the clock instead,

"the glass jangled on the floor." In that one word *jangled* there is a suggestion of all the tension of a maniac's overwrought nerves. Later, when John talks in his sleep, repeating over and over, "I have killed my father. . . . And he's following me," the voice is thus described, "It was the voice of a thing, not a man. It swelled and dwelt on the 'follow,' as if the horror of the pursuit made it moan. . . . His voice seemed to come from an infinite distance. It was like a lost soul moaning in solitude." John drinks poison, and when the mother finds his body, "she gave a squeal like a rabbit in a dog's jaws."

In the following, Thoreau interprets most delightfully the singing of a "certain group of young minstrels":

At evening, the distant lowing of some cow in the horizon beyond the woods sounded sweet and melodious, and at first I would mistake it for the voices of certain minstrels by whom I was sometimes serenaded, who might be straying over hill and dale; but soon I was not unpleasantly disappointed when it was prolonged into the cheap and natural music of the cow. I do not mean to be satirical, but to express my appreciation of those youths' singing, when I state that I perceived clearly that it was akin to the music of the cow, and they were at length one articulation of Nature.

The sounds described in this paragraph from W. H. Hudson likewise possess decisive character. The effects are, of course, greatly enhanced through contrast,—a lovely calm hideously disrupted:

There was a continuous murmur of leche-guanas—a small honey wasp—in the foliage above me, for the tree was in flower, and this soothing sound soon brought that restful feeling to my mind which insensibly leads to slumber. I was, however, still far from sleep, but reeling with eyes half closed, thinking of nothing, when suddenly, from the depths of the dense leafage above me, rang forth a shriek, the most terrible it has ever fallen to the lot of any human being to hear. In sound it was a human cry, yet expressing a degree of agony and despair surpassing the power of any human soul to feel, and my impression was that it could only have been

uttered by some tortured spirit allowed to wander for a season on the earth. Shriek after shriek, each more powerful and terrible to hear than the last, succeeded, and I sprang to my feet, the hair standing erect on my head, a profuse sweat of terror breaking out all over me. The cause of all these maddening sounds remained invisible to my eyes; and finally running to my mule I climbed hastily on to its back and never ceased flogging the poor beast all the way back to Yala.

—"Marta Riquelme," in *Tales of the Pampas.*

Nor must we leave this section without giving examples of descriptions of smells and tastes, each with its own specific qualities interpreted according to its particular effects upon the sensitive observer. The first is from William Beebe, a modern master in the descriptive art:

Along the moonlit trail there came wavering whiffs of orchids, ranging from attar of roses and carnations to the pungence of carrion, the latter doubtless distilled from as delicate and beautiful blossoms as the former. There were, besides, the myriad and bewildering smells of sap, crushed leaves, and decaying wood; acrid, sweet, spicy, and suffocating, some like musty books, others recalling the paint on the Noah's Ark of one's nursery.

—*Jungle Peace.*

In an interesting passage in *The Revolt in the Desert,* T. E. Lawrence tells how from experience he had learned not only to see the unlikeness of race, and hear the unlikeness of language, but "to pick between their smells: the heavy, standing, curdled sourness of dried sweat in cotton, over the Arab crowds; and the feral smell of English soldiers: that hot . . . aura of thronged men in woolen clothes: a tart pungency, breath-catching, ammoniacal; a fervent fermenting naphtha-smell."

In both of these extracts interpretation is an inseparable element of the description. The peculiar quality of each smell can be defined only in terms of its resemblances and effects.

In the following, the writer tries to give us a faithful impression of certain tastes. This, too, is largely interpretative:

Browsing and nibbling has led me to taste the inner bark of nearly every kind of tree growing in American woods. The hickory tree has a sap almost as sweet as that of the maple, but it mingles with the sweet a pungency and a slightly acrid element of taste at once pleasant and repellent to the pampered tongue. The oaks have much tannin in their bark, the astringency of which draws one's lips like green persimmons, but the very innermost part, next the wood, is slightly mucilaginous and faintly sweet. Speaking of persimmons,—after a few sharp frosts this fruit becomes mellow and rich, but to the last retains a certain drawing quality, a trace of that astringency already mentioned, which keeps it from being a favorite, save with the opossums.

MAURICE THOMPSON, *By-Ways and Bird-Notes.*

III

DESCRIBING AND OBSERVING

Successful photography depends in part upon a highly sensitized plate to record minutely and accurately the impressions that rush in to it when the shutter is momentarily snapped. Successful descriptive writing is not mere verbal photography, but to a certain extent there is an analogy. For the mind of the descriptive writer must, like the plate of the camera, be delicately sensitive to the outside world. True perception and accurate recording are requisites to good description. The human mind can fortunately go a step further than the best photographer's instrument: it has the power to select and dwell upon its objects, to scrutinize, analyze, sort, and rearrange the images it receives—to see them in their proper relationships and understand them.

The human mind can also discipline itself to sharper,

more accurate seeing. The German poet Goethe tells how at one period in his youth, in the absence of truly beautiful and sublime objects about him, he became "by dint of unwearied persevering endeavor . . . extremely attentive to the small life of nature." In *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft,* George Gissing reveals in a delightful little descriptive passage what was probably his customary method of observation:

> To-day I have walked far, and at the end of my walk I found the little white-flowered woodruff. It grew in a copse of young ash. When I had looked long at the flower, I delighted myself with the grace of the slim trees about it—their shining smoothness, their olive hue. Hard by stood a bush of wych elm; its tettered bark, overlined as if with the character of some unknown tongue, made the young ashes yet more beautiful.

"When I had looked long at it": there is the first secret of accurate seeing.

Severn was an artist, with an artist's habits of looking closely at things, but when he met John Keats he was astonished by the young poet's faculty of observation:

> Nothing seemed to escape him, the song of a bird and the undernote of response from covert or hedge, the rustle of some animal, the changing of the green and brown lights and furtive shadows, the motions of the wind—just how it took certain tall flowers and plants—and the wayfaring of the clouds: even the features and gestures of passing tramps. . . .
>
> —William Sharpe, *Life and Letters of Joseph Severn.*

No one can describe effectively until he has learned to study the object he is to portray with such intelligence and intentness that he is able to detect its significant and individual qualities, and has, moreover, found names for them. Flaubert was a great artist in descriptive effects, and his advice to his distinguished pupil Guy de Maupassant is therefore of particular interest to students of writ-

ing. As de Maupassant relates in the introduction to his *Pierre et Jean,* Flaubert's teaching ran as follows:

. . . Talent is long patience. It is a question of regarding whatever one desires to express long enough and with attention close enough to discover a side which no one has seen and which has been expressed by none. In everything there is something of the unexplored, because we are accustomed to use our eyes only with the thought of what has already been said concerning the things we see. The smallest thing has in it a grain of the unknown. Discover it. In order to describe a fire that flames or a tree in the plain, we must remain face to face with that fire or that tree until for us they no longer resemble any other tree or any other fire. This is the way to become original.

Having, moreover, impressed upon me the fact that there are not in the whole world two grains of sand, two hands, or two noses absolutely alike, he forced me to describe a being or an object in such a manner as to individualize it clearly, to distinguish it from all other objects of the same kind. "When you pass," he said to me, "a grocer seated in his doorway, a concierge smoking his pipe, a row of cabs, show me this grocer and this concierge, their attitude, all their physical appearance; suggest by the skill of your image all their moral nature, so that I shall not confound them with any other grocer or any other concierge; make me see, by a single word, wherein a cab-horse differs from the fifty others that follow or precede him."

Flaubert is here asking not only for the closest, most discriminative observation, but for precision and integrity in searching out the one word or phrase to express what is distinctive in the thing observed. Flaubert's emphasis upon this last point is excellent; for observation as a preparation for descriptive writing is never complete until it has become verbalized. Wise writers know this. It was, for instance, more than whim that caused Gissing to say, "I like to give its name . . . to every flower I meet in my walks," and more than love for diversion that caused Stevenson to try for a long time, as he tells us, "to hit upon some language that might catch ever so faintly the

indefinable shifting color of olive branches." It was in each case, may we not surmise, the instinct of a true writer to build a word-world to match his object-world; that instinct for accurate and expressive language which fills so many magic pages with light and life and color and sound. Without such accurate verbalizing, observation of men and nature alike becomes mere empty idling; until the just word is found, there can be no clear definition of qualities in the observer's mind; certainly there can be no expressive communication of what is observed to another.

EXERCISES

1. Write an "atmospheric" description. Try in this to interpret the scene in such a way as to emphasize its effects upon the mind to the exclusion of all else.

2. Write a description of a person with especial attention to singleness of visual effect. The impression here is of largeness, beauty, ugliness, daintiness.

3. The following scene exists for the sake of interpretation of character. The description of the woman and her actions reveals with extraordinary clarity an inner nature of vacillating femininity:

> The crowd was perhaps thickest outside the premises of Messrs. Rose and Thorn. Every kind of being, from the highest to the lowest, passed in front of the hundred doors of this establishment; and before the costume window a rather tall, slight, graceful woman stood thinking: "It really is gentian blue! But I don't know whether I ought to buy it, with all this distress about!"
>
> Her eyes, which were greenish-grey, and often ironical lest they should reveal her soul, seemed probing a blue gown displayed in that window, to the very heart of its desirability.
>
> "And suppose Stephen doesn't like me in it!" This doubt set her gloved fingers pleating the bosom of her frock. Into that little pleat she folded the essence of

herself, the wish to have and the fear of being, and her veil, falling from the edge of her hat, three inches from her face, shrouded with its tissue her half-decided little features, her rather too high cheek-bones, her cheeks that were slightly hollowed, as though time had kissed them too much.

—JOHN GALSWORTHY, *Fraternity.*

Write a descriptive sketch of a person in which your main end is interpretation of character.

4. In the following we see a celebrity at lunch. There is not only an excellent portrayal of a scene and a man in a certain situation, but there is much interpretation of character, something, indeed, of an interpretation of two national attitudes toward genius:

The large café was crowded, but we found a good table on the aisle, not far from the door. We had not long to wait, for, punctually on the stroke of one, there entering the doorway was the dour and bristling presence known to all the world in caricature—caricatures which were no exaggeration, but, as in the case of Swinburne, just the man himself. The great ruff of white whisker, ferociously standing out all round his sallow, bilious face, as if dangerously charged with electricity, the immaculate silk hat, the white tie, the frock-coated martinet's figure, dressed from top to toe in old-fashioned black broadcloth, at once funereal and professorial, the trousers concertinaed, apparently with dandiacal design, at the ankles, over his highly polished boots, the carefully folded umbrella, all was there apparitionally visible before me: a forbidding, disgruntled, tight-lipped presence, starchily dignified, straight as a ramrod: there he was, with a touch, as I hinted, of grim dandyism about him, but with no touch of human kindness about his parchment skin, or small, fierce badger eyes. He might have been a Scotch elder entering the kirk. As he entered, and proceeded with precisian tread to the table reserved in perpetuity for him, and which no one else would have dreamed of occupying, a thing new and delightful—to me, a mere

> Anglo-Saxon—suddenly happened. As one man, the whole café was on its feet in an attitude of salute and a stranger standing near me who evidently spoke English and recognized my nationality said to me in a loud but reverent aside, "That is our great poet—Henrik Ibsen." All remained standing till he had taken his seat, as in the presence of a king, and I marvelled joyously at a people that thus did homage to their great men, not without reflections on the Anglo-Saxon's very different attitude towards its great.
>
> —Richard Le Gallienne, *The Romantic '90's.*

Try writing a similar description. Use some man and scene from your own experience.

5. George Eliot describes the eyes of Dinah Morris as she stood before her audience ready to speak in this way: "They had the liquid look that tells that the mind is full of what it has to give out, rather than impressed by external objects." (*Adam Bede*)

Describe a person who shows that he has something to say. Picture him before an audience, before a class, or in a room full of people. Avoid such hackneyed expressions as "bursting with importance" or "with news," "dying to tell his secret," and so forth.

6. In *Krakatit* the princess writes of a maid whom she had dismissed,

> She was beautiful and cried, and I enjoyed watching her tears. Imagine, I'd never noticed before the way in which tears came. They well up, run down the cheek quickly, stop, and then catch up with the others.

7. What does a chair look like from underneath?

Describe an upset table, an electric fan lying on its face, a squeezed tube of paste, a battered hat; the peculiar smile or grin of a friend, the limp, the walk, the cough of some man or woman you know; a tired child, a boy on a fishing trip, a proud father.

8. Sketch, in one paper, from three to five of the children whom you knew best in your primary school days. Write of them as you now recall that they *then seemed* to you. Remember that few can do even this with fidelity, because it is very difficult to

avoid interpretation in terms of intervening experience. The proof, however, of one's having been a good observer is that one does not have to change his mind.

9. Analyze out all the various elements appealing through the various senses, and tabulate them, as they appear in the selection from Stevenson given below:

THE WOODS AND THE PACIFIC

The Bay of Monterey has been compared by no less a person than General Sherman to a bent fishing-hook; and the comparison, if less important than the march through Georgia, still shows the eye of a soldier for topography. Santa Cruz sits exposed at the shank; the mouth of the Salinas River is at the middle of the bend, and Monterey itself is cosily ensconced beside the barb. Thus the ancient capital of California faces across the bay, while the Pacific Ocean, though hidden by low hills and forest, bombards her left flank and rear with never-dying surf. In front of the town, the long line of sea-beach trends north and northwest, and then westward to enclose the bay. The waves which lap so quietly about the jetties of Monterey grow louder and larger in the distance; you can see the breakers leaping high and white by day; at night, the outline of the shore is traced in transparent silver by the moonlight and the flying foam; and from all round, even in quiet weather, the low, distant, thrilling roar of the Pacific hangs over the coast and the adjacent country like smoke above a battle.

These long beaches are enticing to the idle man. It would be hard to find a walk more solitary and at the same time more exciting to the mind. Crowds of ducks and sea-gulls hover over the sea. Sandpipers trot in and out by troops after the retiring waves, trilling together in a chorus of infinitesimal song. Strange sea-tangles, new to the European eye, the bones of whales, or sometimes a whole whale's carcase, white with carrion gulls and poisoning the wind, lie scattered here and there along the sands. The waves come in slowly, vast and green, curve their

translucent necks, and burst with a surprising uproar, that runs, waxing and waning, up and down the long keyboard of the beach. The foam of these great ruins mounts in an instant to the ridge of the sand glacis, swiftly fleets back again, and is met and buried by the next breaker. The interest is perpetually fresh. On no other coast that I know shall you enjoy, in calm, sunny weather, such a spectacle of Ocean's greatness, such beauty of changing color, or such degrees of thunder in the sound. . . .

The one common note of all this country is the haunting presence of the ocean. A great faint sound of breakers follows you high up into the inland cañons; the roar of water dwells in the clean, empty rooms of Monterey as in a shell upon the chimney; go where you will, you have but to pause and listen to hear the voice of the Pacific. You pass out of the town to the southwest, and mount the hill among pine-woods. Glade, thicket, and grove surround you. You follow winding, sandy tracks that lead nowhither. You see a deer; a multitude of quail arises. But the sound of the sea still follows you as you advance, like that of wind among the trees, only harsher and stranger to the ear; and when at length you gain the summit, out breaks on every hand and with freshened vigor that same unending, distant, whispering rumble of the ocean; for now you are on the top of Monterey peninsula, and the noise no longer only mounts to you from behind along the beach toward Santa Cruz, but from your right also, round by Chinatown and Pinos lighthouse, and from down before you to the right of the Carmello River. The whole woodland is begirt with thundering surges. The silence that immediately surrounds you where you stand is not so much broken as it is haunted by this distant, circling rumor. It sets your senses upon edge; you strain your attention; you are clearly and unusually conscious of small sounds near at hand; you walk listening like an Indian hunter; and that voice of the Pacific is a sort of disquieting company to you in your walk. . . .

The woods and the Pacific rule between them the climate of this seaboard region. On the streets of Monterey,

when the air does not smell salt from the one, it will be blowing perfumed from the resinous tree-tops of the other. For days together a hot, dry air will overhang the town, close as from an oven, yet healthful and aromatic in the nostrils. The cause is not far to seek, for the woods are afire, and the hot wind is blowing from the hills. These fires are one of the great dangers of California. I have seen from Monterey as many as three at the same time, by day a cloud of smoke, by night a red coal of conflagration in the distance. A little thing will start them, and if the wind be favorable they gallop over miles of country faster than a horse. The inhabitants must turn out and work like demons, for it is not only the pleasant groves that are destroyed; the climate and the soil are equally at stake, and these fires prevent the rains of the next winter and dry up perennial fountains. California has been a land of promise in its time, like Palestine; but if the woods continue so swiftly to perish, it may become, like Palestine, a land of desolation. . . .

But it is the Pacific that exercises the most direct and obvious power upon the climate. At sunset, for months together, vast, wet, melancholy fogs arise and come shoreward from the ocean. From the hill-top above Monterey the scene is often noble, although it is always sad. The upper air is still bright with sunlight; a glow still rests upon the Gabelano Peak; but the fogs are in possession of the lower levels; they crawl in scarves among the sand-hills; they float, a little higher, in clouds of a gigantic size and often of a wild configuration; to the south, where they have struck the seaward shoulder of the mountains of Santa Lucia, they double back and spire up skyward like smoke. Where their shadow touches, color dies out of the world. The air grows chill and deadly as they advance. The trade-wind freshens, the trees begin to sigh, and all the windmills of Monterey are whirling and creaking and filling their cisterns with the brackish water of the sands. It takes but a little while till the invasion is complete. The sea, in its lighter order, has submerged the earth. Monterey is curtained in for the night in thick, wet, salt,

and frigid clouds, so to remain till day returns; and before the sun's rays they slowly disperse and retreat in broken squadrons to the bosom of the sea. And yet often when the fog is thickest and most chill, a few steps out of the town and up the slope, the night will be dry and warm and full of inland perfume.

—Robert Louis Stevenson, *Across the Plains.*

IV

Point of View

Anything described must always be represented as having been seen through the eyes of some one, heard through the ears of some one, smelled through the nose of some one; and, moreover, as having been seen, heard, or smelled from some definite place or places. This leads to a consideration of the greatest importance to the descriptive writer, known technically as *Point of View*. By point of view we have reference to the Some One and the Some Place in relationship to the Some Thing described. A discussion of point of view naturally falls under two heads: physical point of view and mental point of view.

1. PHYSICAL POINT OF VIEW

Physical point of view has to do with the position of the observer with relation to the thing observed. It may be static, that is, fixed, or it may be changing. A writer might describe a city as viewed from a street corner or an apartment window, or from a hilltop, a high tower, or a stationary balloon. The same writer might, however, present his city to us as seen from an in-coming steamer, train, or automobile, or as viewed by one riding through it by bus or flying over it by airplane. Or if he were describing a man, he might picture him to us as he would

appear from the back, from the side, or the front, or at rest nearby, or in motion as seen from a distance. His description might in all cases be equally accurate and equally successful artistically, but the content of each would necessarily be quite different from that of any other, for it is possible to include in a logically written description only that which could be seen from the point of view selected.

Fixed Point of View.—An unusually fine illustration of attention to point of view occurs in the tale of *Nino Diablo* by W. H. Hudson, where, having presented a most delightful picture of Gregory's home—the kitchen at evening time, with food cooking over a bright fire and every one quietly busy in his own way—the author unobtrusively tells us from what point all this is observed: "Gregory stood on the threshold surveying this domestic scene with manifest pleasure."

An example of fixed or static point of view is to be observed in an early passage in Warwick Deeping's *Doomsday*. Arnold Furze "had paused for a moment where the Melhurst and Rotherbridge roads join each other at an acute angle and become the road to Carslake." From this point of vantage he surveyed Cinder Town lying before him, splotchy and abominable in the morning sun.

In the following excellent descriptive bit the point of view is particularly obvious:

> Alwyn would pause on the doorstep. There lay the countryside which, sixty years before, had been her wilderness—changed no less than she. Many gravel roads running parallel through the distance, as white as marble; chickens dusting their feathers in them, frightened away by automobiles. Thousands of telephone poles making the sound of a tuning fork. Reapers, cultivators, sowers, hayracks, tedders, and racks, creeping like mechanical spiders over the slopes. Cattle of all colors under the hickories. Sunshine flashing on the tines of pitchforks, on idle plowshares,

shovel blades, and the sides of tin pails full of lunch. Sunshine streaming in the orchards over large apples which seemed to revolve in the leaves. Clouds which looked like pieces of pleated linen. Far away, harnessed horses in miniature, and men wearing blue shirts, their arms bare to the biceps; and over their heads the sky full of heat waves gliding and curling. . . .

—Wescott, *The Grandmothers.*

One can find few better models in the art of descriptive writing than Joseph Conrad, and none is more scrupulous in attention to point of view. An excellent illustration of his care in this matter occurs in the opening, wholly descriptive, of *The Secret Sharer,* where the fixed location of the observer is indicated twice in the first paragraph, once in the middle, once at the end:

(1) And when I turned my head to take a parting glance at the tug which had just left us *anchored outside the bar,* I saw the straight line of the flat shore, etc.

(2) And then I was left alone with my ship, *anchored at the head of the Gulf of Siam.*

Changing Point of View.—When the point of view is changed, as in the approach to a city or in walking toward a house and then entering it, the reader should of course be told what is going on. The careful writer of description will always take his reader with him as he shifts his ground from point to point.

In the opening paragraphs of Hudson's admirable tale of the pampas, *El Ombú,* a good deal of description centers about the great tree known as "*the* ombú." There are three points of view indicated. In the first passage we are told that "go twenty leagues to this way and that you will not find a tree as big as this ombú, standing solitary, where there is no house." Here the point of view is only inferred—the observer is probably standing or approaching somewhere far enough away from the ombú to get the

effect of bigness and solitariness. But in the next passage the observer's position is definite:

> From one of the higher branches, if you can climb, you will see the lake of Chascomus, two-thirds of a league away. . . .

And again, returning to a description of the tree, the author makes the point of view clear:

> Sometimes, at midnight, the whole tree, from its great roots to its topmost leaves, is seen *from a distance,* shining like white fire.

De Amicis describes Constantinople as he sees it from an approaching ship. The first view comes after an hour's wait on the bridge—a glimpse of a pointed minaret at Stamboul. The ship rapidly advances: more minarets, then a view of two miles of city, but nothing yet remarkable. And then a further advance, with a sudden revelation of glorious Sancta Sophia, and a rapid unrolling of larger vistas of the city—high hills, beautiful towering mosques, green, rosy, glittering. The ship stops, and there is time to observe more details; a high hill "clothed with cypresses, pines, firs, and great plane trees" projecting beyond the walls is before them. And in the midst of this verdure rise "tops of kiosks . . . silvery cupolas, little buildings of rare and graceful forms." Then he turns toward Scutari, until now veiled in fog, and this is described. And so the author takes us with him on the approach until, finally, Seraglio Point is passed, and the culminating moment is reached. Constantinople proper lies revealed in all her exotic splendor; and here the description proper may be said to begin.

An instance of scrupulous regard to change in point of view is to be found in Hawthorne's *Mosses From an Old Manse.* After a first general description of the manse and its impressions upon the new arrival, there follows a detailed presentation of the house and its environs, as if seen through the eyes of one personally conducting visi-

tors over the place. A few sentences will illustrate the attention this capable writer pays to point of view.

> We stand now on the river's brink.
>
> Come, we have pursued a somewhat devious track on our walk to the battle-ground. Here we are, at the point where the river was crossed by the old bridge. . . .
>
> The Old Manse! We had almost forgotten it, but will return thither through the orchard.

Beginners in composition may well emulate the example of such writers and make a point of seeing to it that whenever they shift their post of observation they shall take their readers with them. This is, of course, merely to be considerate; it is, moreover, a matter of logic and common judgment, yet it frequently happens in amateur writing that it is the obvious which is overlooked.

2. MENTAL POINT OF VIEW

Mental point of view has reference to the whole attitude of mind of a writer toward his subject. Since it is this attitude which must determine the peculiar quality of a description—its tone, its emphasis, its purpose—mental point of view is a much more important thing than physical point of view. Physical point of view is geographic and mathematical; mental point of view is psychological. It represents what has gone on in the head. It is founded on the emotions and the intellect working in response to the sum of sense impressions from a given external object.

Opposing Points of View.—Objects, like words, have power to produce connotations as well as denotations; and these connotations naturally have much to do in forming mental points of view. But just as the same word connotes different things for different people, so like objects produce quite different effects on different minds. This explains the frequent occurrence of opposing points of

view. Part of this would seem to be due to a sort of natural bent of mind, which may in extreme cases reveal itself with unmistakable emphasis.

There are people, for instance, who have an inborn aversion to cats; and there are also those who are especially fond of cats. The same cat described by representatives of these two groups would fare quite differently. The Alps as seen by the practical classicist presented an unpleasant obstacle to be gotten over as quickly as possible; but to the romantically-minded Gray and Wordsworth, they were sublimely beautiful, inspirational of pleasant emotion and poetic thought. In savage condemnation of their faults, the satirical Swift caricatured his countrymen, whom many have praised for their virility, as a race of puny Lilliputians, six inches high, gravely busy at vain nothings. The pessimistic Schopenhauer saw little beauty in women, and the misanthrope Timon despised the sight of men.

But whether it can be laid to natural bent, to acquired interest, or to temporary mood of mind, different people see things differently, and consequently describe them differently. To one person the three-months Oregon rain is a blessing direct from God, and he grins cheerfully at you through the water-soaked air, on his way home to write a lyric description of it; to another this same rain is hateful. Two people stand on the brink of the Grand Canyon of Arizona. One nonchalantly smokes a cigar, as he glances casually over the landscape, and remarks that things about here bore him; the other cannot speak for the emotion he feels in the presence of so much grandeur. A noisy parade before a football game is described by a nervous old lady as hideous and fiendish, but to the young collegian it is a wonderful demonstration of the musical potentialities of steam whistles, firearms, and steel saws. Carol Kennicott, fresh from Minneapolis, sees everything in Gopher Prairie as appallingly mean and depressing;

but to Bea Sorenson, of Scandia Crossing with its sixty-seven inhabitants, the two-story brick shops, and the drug store with a soda fountain, are things to marvel and dream about, and she marches up and down the Ford-lined concrete streets gazing in at the windows of the Bon Ton Store and staring at the people she meets in delighted admiration.

So in the description of people, according to temperament, previous experience, or what not, the sympathetic, friendly mind sees and depicts the attractive; the unsympathetic mind, the unattractive. Rousseau saw in the untutored peasant an approach to the "noble savage," to whom one must look for all the elemental human virtues; but to Zola the French countryman was little better than a lascivious pig. Leigh Hunt, a liberal in politics, was once imprisoned for declaring that the Prince Regent, who had been described by the Tory papers as practically an Adonis in loveliness, was really a "corpulent man of fifty, without one claim to the gratitude of his country." In like manner, the division of sentiment among those who knew Archdeacon Brandon in Walpole's *The Cathedral* showed itself in the two interpretations of his great noisy laugh, which his admirers described as "Homeric," but which others not so friendly mentioned as "ear-splitting."

An unusually interesting example of conflicting points of view is to be seen in two well-known descriptions of Tennyson.

Thomas Carlyle meets Tennyson, is pleased, and delightedly sets down his impressions. He sees nothing but the pleasant, hence conveys nothing but the pleasant:

> One of the finest looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusty-dark hair; bright-laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face; most massive yet most delicate; of sallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free and easy; smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musically metallic,—fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and

speculation free and plenteous; I do not meet in these late decades, such company over a pipe.[1]

But now view this same Tennyson as seen through the eyes of another, less friendly contemporary, J. A. Symonds:

He has a face like a lion's; his head is small above it, though the forehead is broad and massive, something like Trajan's in its proportion to the features. Character, far more than intellect, strikes me in his physiognomy, and there is a remarkable duplicity of expression—iron, vice-like resolution combined with a subtle, mobile ingeniousness. . . .

Tennyson all the while kept drinking glasses of port and glowering round the room through his spectacles. His moustache hides the play of his mouth, but as far as I could see, that feature is as grim as the rest. He has cheek-bones carved out of iron. His head is domed, quite the reverse of Gladstone's—like an Elizabethan head, strong in the coronal, narrow in the frontal regions, but very finely moulded. It is like what Conington's head seems trying to be.

—*Letters and Papers.*

The Subjective Element.—Such opposing points of view are to be classed broadly under the head of subjective attitudes. That part of a mental point of view which has to do with personal impression and individual interpretation is known as the Subjective Element. The subjective element pervades practically all literary description. Wherever a writer interprets or wherever he creates a dominant impression, he is writing under the influence of the subjective element. All atmospheric and most graphic description is subjective; as is, indeed, all description written in response to any emotionalized mood of mind.

The antithesis of subjective is, of course, objective. A

[1] Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson.

description entirely objective would eliminate personal impression. It would simply show the object as it exists in its physical aspects. That is, a purely objective description would be dimensional, mathematically precise as to feet and inches, and so forth. It is a question whether there is such a thing as a wholly objective description. Even in those descriptions made for technical and scientific purposes, it is often evident that the object has excited some subjective response: fitness, precision, ingenuity of design have aroused admiration; or clumsiness and inadaptability, disfavor. In literary works of good quality, the nearest approach to mere mathematical objective description probably occurs in mystery and detective stories —recall the precise geographic lay-out of Poe in *The Gold Bug,* of Stoker in *Dracula,* or of Van Dine in *The Canary Murder Case.* Yet in all such descriptions the subjective element is almost sure to creep in—a suggestion of suspense here, a touch to create mood of mind there, hints of thrilling mystery everywhere—until the very care the writer has taken to be objective makes the whole scene subjective in effect.

A kind of description which would at first thought appear objective, but which is really subjective is what one might call the charted description, where through analogy or other means the writer represents a scene with something like mathematical exactness. He has a fundamental image of the object in his mind which corresponds to known objects in the physical world. And he tries to convey that image to us through reference to the form of these physical objects. The method is apparently objective, but in reality, as has been suggested in an earlier section of this chapter, the subjective element here is strong. Thus when Victor Hugo asks us to think of the battlefield of Waterloo as shaped like a letter A, or when Stevenson compares the Bay of Monterey to a bent fish-

hook, or Thoreau likens the appearance of Cape Cod to a bended arm and fist, each is, after all, merely giving us a personal impression of how the object appeared to him; he is making no pretense of being scientifically exact.

All figures of speech in descriptive writing, and they are very numerous indeed, serve this same purpose of presenting a thing in the way it has struck the mind of the writer. When writers talk of "eyes like saucers," or of the noise of an airplane as resembling "the angry buzz of a million bees," or of two tempting coins confronting a girl "like a pair of jaundiced eyes on the watch for an opportunity," they are simply doing what they can with words to convey exact mental impressions.

Some writers employ the subjective element in description to the point of abuse. And young writers should be on their guard against any temptation to substitute mere vague "atmospheric" effects for those more substantial results to be secured through the presentation of selected details which will carry their own weight of implication.

A description with a proper combination of objective with subjective elements is probably the kind for a beginning student to work toward. Keats's description of Staffa and Fingal's Cave, on page 632, is an excellent model for this sort of writing. Keats's one anxiety at the start seems to be to give a really clear idea of what this place looks like. He makes some use of direct descriptive detail, but in general he employs the comparative method, referring us for help in building our visual images to such well-known forms as roofs, columns, pillars, and armies of men, and he succeeds admirably in presenting his picture. The main purpose here would seem to be objective, but the subjective element constantly creeps in. It comes first in the suggestion of the difficulty of describing the place, then in the comparisons used—these are all impressions—and, finally, in the general emotional impression: "For

solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest cathedral."

Purpose in Description.—Purpose in description may be defined as the writer's aim in presenting an object. This aim may not always be recognized, yet we may fairly assume that, whether conscious or unconscious, it is always present. The writer does not, of course, always say to himself, "Now I will write a description in which I will give an impression of motion," or, "Now I will give my readers an accurate picture of the Chartreuse." In fact, we may be sure that very frequently he does not. Carlyle was probably so filled with his good impression of Tennyson that he simply sat down without any special premeditation and wrote it out. And Symonds certainly did not say to himself, "I will now present an unfavorable impression of Tennyson." Yet in each case, down underneath, working like a silent chemical reaction, there was stirring a purpose—a purpose to present the man as he appeared to be.

But a writer may have a much more deliberate purpose. What this is will depend upon his conscious mental point of view toward his subject. He may, for instance, have a purely scientific and practical purpose. In this case he will present his object in a more or less matter-of-fact way. His aim is to give information, not to stimulate the imagination. A very old and well-known account of this kind is the Biblical description of Noah's Ark:

> Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.
>
> And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.
>
> A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.
>
> —*Genesis* vi: 14-16.

Technical and practical descriptions are, however, really expository in purpose, and have accordingly been treated in the chapter on Exposition.

Again, the writer may propose to describe his object with emphasis on the objective elements. As has already been pointed out, however, it is extremely difficult in imaginative writing to stick to the objective. Le Gallienne's description of Ibsen, page 601, and Symonds's Badenweiler may have been intended to be chiefly objective. But in each case the subjective made itself felt. Keats evidently set out to emphasize the objective in his picture of Staffa, though, as we have seen, whether he designed it or not, the subjective reactions found a large place in the description. Students may well practice writing descriptions with emphasis on the objective. They will find it profitable to try drawing exact portraits of people, for instance, studying the peculiar features, studying forms and faces as carefully as would a painter or sculptor. And they can do the same thing with trees, and houses, and landscapes, until they have developed some of the skill in the faithful delineation of objects, so necessary to the good descriptive writer.

For a third purpose, a writer may plan to present his subject with emphasis on the subjective. Much of our distinctly interpretative description may be made to fall under this head. The descriptions of the dairy and the Poyser farmyard, page 591, Thomason's hot afternoon in France, page 590, the passage from Beowulf, and the picture of Corineus, page 588, are examples. Enough has already been said concerning this type of description to show its importance.

The writer may plan a description wholly subjective. The description is here based entirely on personal impression. This is, of course, impressionistic description. The completely impressionistic method is most nearly illustrated in this chapter by the passages from Conrad, page

594, and Dickens, page 592. As has already been pointed out, it is a method open to easy abuse, but at its best, as it is sometimes used by such writers as Conrad, Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Thomas Hardy, it is undeniably effective.

EXERCISES

1. Write two descriptions of a street in your college town.

(a) In the first assume a position at some corner or other convenient point and describe the scene as it appears from there.

(b) Now describe the same scene from a shifting point of view, as you would see it walking or riding down the street, or from two or more fixed points.

2. Study the descriptions in the novel you are reading for evidences of attention to point of view.

3. Describe a person as he would appear to you if you were his friend.

4. Now describe him as if you disliked him.

5. Describe the laugh of some person as it appeals to you when you are good-natured.

6. Describe this same laugh as it sounds to you in one of your blacker moods.

7. Study the longer descriptive passages in this chapter for point of view. Decide, if you can, from what physical and from what mental point of view each is written.

8. Describe in a generously sketchy way the scene or scenes which arise in your mind as you read the following:

> The Lord possessed me as the beginning of his way.
> When he prepared the heavens, I was there:
> When he gave to the sea its bound:
> When he marked out the foundations of the earth:
> Then I was by him, as a master workman:
> And I was daily his delight;
> Sporting always before him;
> Sporting in his habitable earth;
> And my delight was with the sons of men.
>
> —*Proverbs*, viii, 22, *seq.*

9. Discuss the object of which de Musset's White Blackbird speaks in the following passage:

> I had counted its grooves, its holes, its bumps, its nicks, its splinters, its nails, its spots, its different tints and shimmers; I exhibited the inside, the outside, the rim, the bottom, the sides, the inclined planes, the perpendicularities; passing to the contents, I had studied the wisps of grass and straw, the dry leaves, the tiny bits of wood, the gravel, the drops of water, the remains of flies, the broken cockchafers' legs that were in it; it was a ravishing description.

10. A British scientist, Dr. Adolph Abrahams, of London, has made the assertion that we possess what may be called an "anticipatory sense of sight." A photographer sees the picture of an event, a tableau, before it occurs. How otherwise could he take precisely the picture he wants to take and does get? He knows he is going to get it, because he has seen it before it occurs. A printer visualizes a title page before the type is set, and even cut. Some persons see occurrences which never come into being: "Persons of a highly emotional temperament, such as musicians and poets, whose optic nerves are stretched like an E string, not only see things before they happen, but things that were switched off and never do happen."

Picture in language some such event as is suggested above.

11. Lowell wrote of Thomas Gray that Gray had "a perfect sense of sound, and one idea without which all the poetic outfit is of little avail,—that of combination and arrangement." Select a descriptive passage from one of the poems of William Cowper, say, *The Task,* and analyze its processes of combination and arrangement of the elements which the poet employed to make his picture.

12. Elizabeth Barrett Browning said that art is

> "the witness of what is
> Behind this show. If this world's show were all,
> Then imitation would be all in art."

Describe a scene "from life" in such terms that the reader will be readily led to see that the scene has profound significance without your saying that it has.

13. From which do you receive the richest experience, eye, ear, or mind? Write three brief descriptions, one of something visible, another of something audible only, a third of what you have never seen nor heard but can imagine sufficiently well to make description of it come easily from your pen.

14. What is the dominant impression conveyed in the following lines?

> There is no dew on the dry grass tonight,
> Nor damp within the shadow of the trees,
> The wind is intermitting, dry and light;
> And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
> The dust and straws are driven up and down,
> And whirled about the pavement of the town.
>
> —SHELLEY, *Evening: Ponte al Mare, Pisa.*

15. Of the factors necessary in writing good description,—observational power, memory, reflection,—which is strongest in you? Write a description of three hundred words in length which will be wholly devoid of figures of speech. Another, with whatever sort of diction may come to you, of an experience which has suddenly been remembered by you,—do this at once after the sudden remembering has occurred. Still another which is very much dependent for its arrangement, length, and details upon deliberate and extended reflection.

V

METHODS IN DESCRIPTION

Description, unlike painting, must present its details progressively. In a painting we see all at a glance; in a written description we must proceed from detail to detail, one step at a time.[1] A special problem in descriptive writing, then, is to select such details and present them in such an order as will enable the reader to combine his

[1] For a more complete discussion of the differences between painting and poetry see Lessing's *Laocoön.*

separate impressions into a single unified image. The most natural way to achieve this end is to present the general outline, or the dominant impression, in one large brush stroke somewhere near the beginning, then to sketch in such pertinent details as are necessary to fill out the picture. This process may be reversed, the large impression coming at the end.

The principle of selection is here of the greatest importance. In painting, the artist never includes everything, but selects the salient and homogeneous details; even in photography the principle of selection is observed, for the skillful photographer will choose that portion of the view which, with lights and shadows falling right for the emphasis he desires, best represents what is distinctive about the whole scene. In description, the selection of detail is of even greater consequence: here visual imagery must be aroused through words alone. Much of the effect must be secured through suggestion. Too little detail, or too much detail, will be alike fatal. Perhaps the error of too great detail is the more serious; it is astonishing how easily the mind becomes cluttered up when too many images occur in rapid succession.

It may be said in general that the secret of good description consists not in the number of images, but in the clearness with which significant details are presented. For example, writers like George Gissing and W. H. Hudson often secure the desired effect through a very few details, with perhaps a contrasting element to throw the principal impression into relief. Thus in Hudson's "Pelino Viera's Confession" one finds this brief description:

> My horse being tired when I approached my destination, I walked him slowly through the wood of tala trees. . . . Finding the shade grateful and wishing to feel my feet on the ground, I dismounted and led my horse by the bridle. A great silence rested on the earth; only the distant lowing of cattle could be heard, and

sometimes a wild bird broke into song near me. This quiet of nature was grateful to me; I could not have wished for a sweeter welcome.

—*Tales of the Pampas.*

And in *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft,* Gissing likewise thriftily secures the effect of the quiet beauty he desires:

Moving homeward by a new way, I presently found myself on the side of a little valley, in which lay a farm and an orchard. The apple trees were in full bloom, and, as I stood gazing, the sun, which had all that day been niggard of its beams, burst forth gloriously. For what I then saw, I have no words; I can but dream of the still loveliness of that blossomed valley. Near me a bee was humming; not far away, a cuckoo called; from the pasture of the farm below came a bleating of lambs.

There are, however, exceptions to this economy in the use of detail, though even in the exceptions there must always be rigid and discriminative selection. In contrast with these is the method frequent in Joseph Conrad, who lavishly piles on detail after detail until, through the weight of multiplied imagery and suggestion, he achieves with no uncertainty the dominant impression he desires. A glance at the passage from *The Secret Sharer* quoted on page 592, will show something of this method; and the graphic presentations of fire and storm in such stories as *Youth* and *The Typhoon* will be readily brought to mind as illustrative of Conrad's almost matchless power in building up effects through a wealth of cumulative detail.

Order of Detail.—The order in which details are presented has much to do with the success of a given piece of description. The following picture of Badenweiler, included by J. A. Symonds in a letter to one of his friends, illustrates a natural and effective order of presentation

in describing places. First there is a statement of general impression: "This place is certainly beautiful." Then the general character of the landscape is given: "thick woods," supplemented by the larger contributing details—"silver pine mingled with oak and beech trees," and the like. And after that the more particular details,—such as would be seen on much closer observation: ferns, mosses, certain dainty flowers, running water. Finally, having presented the general and more minute beauties of this spot, the observer invites us to let our eyes wander about the surrounding country, to the stretches of the Rhone valley beyond, and the clear outlines of the distant Vosges; and then he is ready for his conclusion, which particularizes and reinforces the opening statement as to the beauty of the place: "A poetic country, a modern Arcady."

In this passage the author presents his scene in accordance with two well-recognized methods in describing landscapes: he proceeds from the *large* to the *small,* and from the *near* to the *far*. This does not necessarily mean that the writer actually saw these elements in the order named; it only means that under the necessary limitation of proceeding progressively step by step in writing, he chose, either by instinct or after some reflection, to present his details in this order. For instance, let us suppose the writer first saw this place from a little eminence which permitted him to view the whole scene in outline; in that case he would certainly see the surrounding country of the Rhine and Vosges before he could observe such minutiæ as the wood-sorrel and bilberry bell. But the order used, while not inevitable—another writer might have chosen to give the wide sweep of the entire landscape first—is, nevertheless, a logical one. Having centered attention upon the main object to be described, the author may be expected to continue down to the smaller details here, and then, as it were, lift his eyes to the more distant

prospect. And to the reader the process seems entirely natural and pleasing.

This place is certainly beautiful. Thick woods of silver pine, mingled with oak and beech upon the lower levels, sometimes opening into meadows of the richest grass, sometimes so tangled that the sun scarcely pierces their roof of branches. There is an undergrowth of ferns, with "frail wood-sorrel and bilberry bell" in rippling sheets among the mosses. Abundant water flows through the grass, which is everywhere enamelled with marsh-marigold and white narcissus and orchises and lilac cuckoo-flower. Far away stretches the Rhine-valley, bordered on the west by that exquisitely pencilled outline of the Vosges—a poetic country, a modern Arcady, with simple folk inhabiting its comfortable old farm-houses.

—Symonds, *Letters and Papers.*

An excellent example of giving first the dominant impression, and then building up the definite picture with harmonious supporting elements is to be found near the opening of Hugh Walpole's fine novel, *The Cathedral.* Here is a splendid model in personal description.

Archdeacon Brandon was, of course, greatly helped by his magnificent physical presence. "Magnificent" is not, I think, too strong a word. Six feet two or three in height, he had the figure of an athlete, light blue eyes, and his hair was still, when he was fifty-eight years of age, thick and fair and curly like that of a boy. He looked, indeed, marvellously young, and his energy and grace of movement might indeed have belonged to a youth still in his teens. It is not difficult to imagine how startling an effect his first appearance in Polchester created. Many of the Polchester ladies thought that he was like "a Greek God" (the fact that they had never seen one gave them the greater confidence), and Miss Dobell, who was the best read of all the ladies in our town, called him "the Viking." This stuck to him, being an easy and emphatic word and pleasantly cultured.

A description which, like the object it portrays, "once seen is not easily forgotten," is J. B. Lightfoot's account

of the monument of the poet John Donne. The order of presentation is that of statement of the large and significant followed by pertinent detail. The method employed is naturally suited to personal description, with, however, emphasis upon a contrasting background.

Against the wall of the south choir aisle in the Cathedral of St. Paul is a monument which very few of the thousands who visit the church daily observe, or have an opportunity of observing, but which, once seen, is not easily forgotten. It is the long, gaunt, upright figure of a man, wrapped close in a shroud, which is knotted at the head and feet, and leaves only the face exposed—a face wan, worn, almost ghastly, with eyes closed as in death. The figure is executed in white marble, and stands on an urn of the same, as if it had just arisen therefrom. The whole is placed in a black niche which by its contrast enhances the death-like paleness of the shrouded figure. Above the canopy is an inscription recording that the man whose effigy stands beneath, though his ashes are mingled with western dust, looks toward him whose name is the Orient. . . . It was not such a monument as Donne's surviving friends might think suitable to commemorate the deceased, but it was the very monument which Donne himself designed as a true emblem of his past life and future hopes.

—J. B. Lightfoot, *Historical Essays.*

Wilkie Collins describes the villain of his story, *A Terribly Strange Bed,* as he appears to the principal character at the moment that individual is about to break the bank of the cheap gambling joint where he is playing:

I turned round and saw, nodding and smiling at me with inveterate civility, a tall man, dressed in a frogged and braided surtout.

This is the first general impression. There is something of appearance here, something of personality, but in very broad outline. Then come more details; in this case these added particulars belie and otherwise modify the earlier impression:

If I had been in my senses, I should have considered him, personally, as being rather a suspicious specimen of an old soldier. He had goggling bloodshot eyes, mangy mustaches, and a broken nose. His voice betrayed a barrack-room intonation of the worst order, and he had the dirtiest pair of hands I ever saw—even in France. These little personal peculiarities exercised, however, no repelling influence on me. In the mad excitement, the reckless triumph of that moment, I was ready to "fraternize" with anybody who encouraged me in my game.

Length of Descriptive Passages.—Frequently, it would seem, the best effects in descriptions are secured by the brief phrase or sentence which sets a thing off in its distinctive qualities. Our older writers often got good effects with a minimum of description. The princess was *fair* and *tall;* the fairy was beautiful; the avaricious merchant had a long nose; and that was enough to set the imagination at work to create its own image. Later it became the fashion to picture scenes and characters in complete detail; thus whole pages in the novels of Sir Walter Scott's day would be given up to descriptions. At present we seem to require more definite imagery than can be secured from mere general terms, but on the other hand we have eschewed the exhaustive enumerations of our earlier novelists. In their stead we have substituted a descriptive technique which aims at once at brevity and at accurate and individual delineation. There is nothing more delightful than to find descriptive passages where the writer has compressed all that needs to be said into the very briefest compass. Thus when we read Alexander Kuprin's casual remark, "The crane was a pompous, grave bird," we are delighted at the apt imagery. And we are likewise pleased with Ruskin's felicitous drawing of the baby in Giotto's *Birth of the Virgin:*

A round-faced, small-eyed little thing, tied up in a bundle.

Another instance of telling brevity is this from J. A. Symonds:

Frank Palgrave here came in, a little man in morning dress, with short beard and moustache, well-cut features, and a slight cast in his eye, an impatient, unsatisfied look and some self-assertion in his manner. (*Life and Letters*)

In all these cases the secret of success lies in the power of a few words to suggest complete and definite images. John Galsworthy's writings are filled with such brief but effectual descriptive bits. In the *Forsyte Saga,* for instance, in describing the annoying and enigmatic Frenchman, Monsieur Profond, Galsworthy writes:

He looked like a devil, with his dark, clipped, pointed beard; a sleepy one, though, and good-humoured, with fine eyes, unexpectedly intelligent.

And the indolent, bulky George Forsyte is thus presented:

Val saw a large form, and a face clean-shaven, bull-like, a little lowering, with sardonic humour bubbling behind a full grey eye; he remembered it dimly from old days when he would dine with his father at the Iseeum Club.

Again there is this picture of Michael Mont, as he is seen through the eyes of Soames:

. . . Slightly reassured, he raised his eyes to the young man's face. It had rather fawn-like ears, a laughing mouth, with half a toothbrush growing out of it on each side, and small lively eyes, above a normally dressed appearance. (*To Let*)

There is nothing better in Galsworthy than this Pekingese dog:

Ting-a-ling, long, low, slightly higher at both ends, was standing between them, with black muzzle upturned. (*The White Monkey*)

This is the height of perfection in suggestion. Try changing this by writing of a Ting-a-ling in any other way, as "slightly lower in the middle," for instance, and the effect is at once spoiled.

The Progressive Method in Description.—It is a very common thing in the presentation of persons to build up pictures a little at a time, a detail here, a detail there, until the portrait is complete. This has the advantage that, in contrast with the methods of the older novelists who stopped for long detailed descriptions of persons and places, the narrative movement goes on without inconvenient halts. There is the further advantage, too, that this method is closer to nature. Few people get more than a general impression upon meeting a stranger; but with further acquaintance more and more details reveal themselves, sometimes in a most startling way. The writer recalls very well the surprise of discovering one day that a young lady whom he had known for over a year had one dark-brown, one steel-grey eye. A method of description that recognizes this natural process of piecemeal perception is obviously less artificial than that of a detailed portrait at first sight. Descriptive writing of this sort, unlike the older lengthy, segregated kind, is grateful to the reader, rather than obtrusive. It is, as a well-known editor puts it, "tucked in" where it is really needed for specific background and concrete imagery, always in such a way that the forward movement of the story is not impeded.

In *Doomsday* an impression of Mary Viner is built up bit by bit. First, there is given a suggestion of pretty slenderness; then there is mention of a bobbed head, and of a slim ankle. A page later, Furze is looking at her and sees "a pretty dark thing in an old cherry-coloured jumper and black skirt. . . . A pretty girl—and a gentlewoman ——." In a later passage there is a more detailed description:

She was a slim young thing, with long legs and a willowy neck, large dark eyes set wide apart, a wavy and poignant mouth, and one of those noses with a delicate breadth at the nostrils which somehow give an expression of pathos to a woman's face. She could flush quickly and look scared. In repose she was inclined to droop her shoulders and sit with her arms wrapped about her knees, as though life was a cold and dreary business and her brown eyes saw nothing but woe. But, as a matter of fact, she was a strong young wench, supple and healthy, with plenty of red blood, only there was nothing to set it moving as a young thing's blood should move. Her starved, beggar-maid look was due to the fact that two old people were contentedly sucking her vitality.

After this, in descriptive bits neatly "tucked in" as the story moves on, we are told of a dainty taste in dress, of lovely black hair, of the delicate and enticing curve of a white neck, and of other like details, each of which aids in our building for ourselves a picture of rarely alluring feminine beauty.

In like manner Maugham composes for us a portrait of Mildred in *Of Human Bondage,* and of Griffiths and Norah. This is also the method of Galsworthy in presenting Irene and Bosinney and Fleur, and of Conrad in giving us Captain Whalley; in short, one may safely say it is the current practice in most of our longer, and much of our shorter fiction.

The Merging of Description into Narrative Movement.—Parallel with this device of building total impressions through progressive additions and reinforcements we should note the manner in which skillful writers merge description into narrative incident or some narrative adjunct, such as characterization, reflection, or introspection.

Thus Hudson makes the peaceful scene of "Pelino Viera's Confession," quoted on page 621, the setting for entrance into narrative incident:

Suddenly as I walked I heard before me the shrill voices of women quarrelling: they seemed to be very angry, and some of the

expressions they used were dreadful to hear. Very soon I caught sight of them.

Conrad's description at the opening of *The Secret Sharer* likewise leads into narrative; the portrait of the repulsive little postman in *The House with the Green Shutters* merges directly into what the fellow is doing; Mrs. Poyser's immaculate dairy is described as a prelude to a visitation and a scene, and the general picture of activity in the Poyser yards, quoted from the same book, is but a means of introducing the reader to the specific doings of certain persons on the farm this particular fine afternoon; Walpole's description of the archdeacon slips almost imperceptibly into a characterization, and from that into subjective analysis,—thus:

. . . He was not conceited at all—he simply regarded himself as a completely exceptional person. He was not elated that he was exceptional, he did not flatter himself because it was so; God had seen fit (in a moment of boredom, perhaps, at the number of insignificant and misshaped human beings He was forced to create) to fling into the world, for once, a truly Fine Specimen, Fine in Body, Fine in Soul, Fine in Intellect. Brandon had none of the sublime egoism of Sir Willoughby Patterne—he thought of others and was kindly and often unselfish—but he did, like Sir Willoughby, believe himself to be of quite another clay from the rest of mankind. He was intended to rule, God had put him into the world for that purpose, and rule he would—to the glory of God and a little, if it must be so, to the glory of himself. He was a very simple person, as indeed were most of the men and women in Polchester of 1897. He did not analyze motives, whether his own or any else's; he was aware that he had "weaknesses" (his ungovernable temper was a source of real distress to him at times—at other times he felt that it had its uses). On the whole, however, he was satisfied with himself, his appearance, his abilities, his wife, his family, and, above all, his position in Polchester. This last was very splendid.

His position in the Cathedral, in the Precincts, in the Chapter, in the Town, was unshakable.

He trusted in God, of course, but, like a wise man, he trusted also in himself.

—*The Cathedral.*

Comparison and Contrast.—Through comparison or contrast the writer often secures descriptive effects more accurately and economically than through any other method.

"No two women could have been more different," writes Romain Rolland, in *Mother and Son:* "La Trotte, with her sharp tongue and her clumsy shape, big-boned and brawny, with a great Burgundian nose that pushed through people's doors, and the Mother Guillemette, slight, slender, calm." Here from a very few words we seem to know all about the appearance of these two women, as we see them side by side in sharp contrast.

In Conrad's "Amy Foster" we find this excellent example of the presentation of characters in contrast:

With the sun hanging low on its western limit, the expanse of the grass-lands framed in the counter-scarps of the rising ground took on a gorgeous and sombre aspect. A sense of penetrating sadness, like that inspired by a grave strain of music, disengaged itself from the silence of the fields. The men we met walked past, slow, unsmiling, with downcast eyes, as if the melancholy of an over-burdened earth had weighed their feet, bowed their shoulders, borne down their glances.

"Yes," said the doctor to my remark, "one would think the earth is under a curse, since of all her children these that cling to her the closest are uncouth in body and as leaden of gait as if their very hearts were loaded with chains. But here on this same road you might have seen amongst these heavy men a being lithe, supple, and long-limbed, straight like a pine, with something striving upwards in his appearance as though the heart within him had been buoyant. Perhaps it was only the force of the contrast, but when he was passing one of these villagers here, the soles of his feet did not seem to me to touch the dust of the road. He vaulted over the stiles, paced these slopes with a long elastic stride that made him

noticeable at a great distance, and had lustrous black eyes. He was so different from the mankind around that, with his freedom of movement, his soft—a little startled—glance, his olive complexion and graceful bearing, his humanity suggested to me the nature of a woodland creature. He came from there."

—*Falk, and Other Stories.*

Conrad makes an equally effective use of the comparative method in his brief description of Falk:

It seems absurd to compare a tug-boat skipper to a centaur: but he reminded me somehow of an engraving in a little book I had as a boy, which represented centaurs at a stream, and there was one, especially in the foreground, prancing, bow and arrows in hand, with regular severe features and an immense curled wavy beard, flowing down his breast. Falk's face reminded me of that centaur.

On a walking trip to Scotland Keats visited Staffa with its Fingal's Cave. His description of it in one of his inimitable letters is a remarkable example of vivid and distinct impression through the intelligent use of analogy and comparison:

I am puzzled how to give you an idea of Staffa. It can only be represented by a first-rate drawing. One may compare the surface of the island to a roof. This roof is supported by grand pillars of basalt standing together as thick as honeycombs. The finest thing is Fingal's Cave—it is entirely a hollowing out of basalt pillars. Suppose now the Giants who rebelled against Jove had taken a whole mass of black columns and bound them together like bunches of matches; and then with immense axes had made a cavern in the body of these columns—of course the roof and floor must be composed of the broken ends of the columns—such is Fingal's Cave, except that the sea has done the work of excavation, and is continually dashing there; so that we walk along the sides of the cave on the pillars which are left as if for convenient stairs. The roof is arched somewhat gothic-wise, and the length of some of the entire side-pillars is fifty feet. About the island you might

seat an army of men each on a pillar. The length of the cave is one hundred twenty feet, and from its extremity the view into the sea through the large arch at the entrance—the colour of the columns is a sort of black with a lurking gloom of purple therein. For solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest cathedral. At the extremity of the Cave there is a small perforation into another cave, at which the waters meeting and buffeting each other, there is sometimes produced a report as of a cannon heard as far as Iona, which must be twelve miles. As we approached in the boat there was such a fine swell of the sea that the pillars appeared rising immediately out of the crystal. But it is impossible to describe it.[1]

Reinforcement Through Likeness and Contrast in Nature Descriptions.—Descriptive passages often serve to reinforce mood and tone in narrative or drama. Thus the storm in the mad scene on the heath in *King Lear,* the supernatural portents described in *Macbeth* and *Julius Cæsar* are quite in the spirit of the overwrought emotions and unholy actions of the principal personages in these plays, and therefore intensify the total effect the author wished to produce. In prose there is probably no finer example of artistic reinforcement than in that scene of perfect quietude in which Galsworthy, in *The Forsyte Saga,* brings old Jolyon's peaceful life to a peaceful end, one Indian Summer day at Robin Hill. That is a passage every student of description should learn to know almost by heart.[2] Conrad, Poe, and Wilkie Collins were all masters in atmospheric reinforcement, and should be studied for method in securing desired effects.

Equally effective is contrast: sunshine against shadow; a warm, cheerful interior against a cold, stormy outside; a turbulent, rebellious state of mind in contrast with a restful beautiful day, a picture of poverty and misery beside one of gayety and wealth. Literature is full of this kind of description. There are three descriptive bits from

[1] *The Complete Works of John Keats,* H. Buxton Forman, IV, 149-150.
[2] *The Forsyte Saga,* p. 338.

Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts,* memorable for the poignancy of effect secured through contrast, that will serve to illustrate the type of thing of which we are speaking. In each case the violence of man stands out in emphatic relief in contrast with the peace of nature.

A mixed multitude of soldiery and populace fills the space in front of the King's Palace, and they shout and address each other vehemently. During a lull in their vociferations is heard the unperturbed purl of the Tagus over a cascade in the Palace grounds.

A column of six thousand French then climbs the hill against the English centre, and drives in those who are planted there. The English artillery checks its adversaries, and the infantry recover and charge the baffled French down the slopes. Meanwhile the latter's cavalry and artillery are attacking the village itself, and, rushing on a few squadrons of English dragoons stationed there, cut them to pieces. A dust is raised by this ado, and moans of men and shrieks of horses are heard. Close by the carnage the little Maceira stream continues to trickle unconcernedly to the sea.

The picture of unruffled placidity in the fields and woods of Albuera set against the impending volcano of battle is an especially artistic touch:

The birds in the wood, unaware that this day is to be different from every other day there known, are heard singing their overtures with their usual serenity.

The Indirect Method.—One good way to present persons in a narrative, especially if they are either unusually attractive or the reverse, is to describe them indirectly, that is, through the words of some one else, or through an account of their effect upon some person in the story. It is chiefly through this method that we have come to know Shakespeare's characters, who are never formally described by the author, yet become very real to us. In

The Gypsy, Gorki conveys an impression of the almost incredible beauty of Radda—which, we are told, might be expressed on a violin, but not in mere words—by relating the effects of a first-sight of her loveliness upon the handsome old nobleman, who, in his almost insane love, offers to give up wealth, rank, name, everything, if he may only possess her. In Gogol's "St. John's Eve," both Peter and Pidorka are described indirectly: Peter is a poor boy of doubtful parentage; but

> Little cared the black-browed youths and maidens about Peter's parents. They merely remarked that if he only had a new coat, a red sash, a black lambskin cap with a smart blue crown on his head, a Turkish saber by his side, a whip in one hand and a pipe with handsome mountings in the other, he would surpass all the young men. But the pity was, that the only thing poor Peter had was a gray gabardine with more holes in it than there are gold pieces in a Jew's pockets.

Then follows the description of Pidorka, who was "such a beauty as I think you can hardly have chanced to see." But we are not asked to take the narrator's word for it.

> My grandfather's aunt used to say—and you know that it is easier for a woman to kiss the Evil One than to call any one else a beauty—that this Cossack maiden's cheeks were as plump and fresh as the pinkest poppy when, bathed in God's dew, it unfolds its petals and coquets with the rising sun; that her brows were evenly arched over her bright eyes like black cords, such as our maidens buy nowadays, for their crosses and ducats . . . ; that her little mouth, at the sight of which youths smacked their lips, seemed made to warble the songs of the nightingales; that her hair, black as the raven's wing, and soft as young flax, fell in curls over her shoulders, for our maidens did not then plait their hair in pigtails interwoven with pretty bright-hued ribbons.

And it is only when the narrator feels that sufficient credulity has been established through the testimony of

the aunt that he ventures to return to direct comment upon this unbelievably beautiful maiden.

One kind of indirect description is that in which the imagery is aroused entirely through the suggestive power of association, or through a quick leap of mind from effect to cause. An excellent example is to be found in Hugh Walpole's *The Enemy in Ambush,* where Captain Ford becomes impatient with his little Russian landlady, who in her attempts to teach him her language gets nervous and loses her head. "'I'm afraid I don't quite understand you,' his moustache would say to her." Here, without one definite word telling us what the Captain's face is like, we know all about it: its cold impassivity, the hard stare of the eyes, the ironic set of the lips; and we know, too, the quality of the hard-bitten voice that issues through immovable teeth beneath the moustache.

This, of course, is a method which relies generously on the imagination of the reader. But if the writer's touch is deft, that imagination seldom fails to respond. The whole secret is to present a picture of some peculiar or typical action in itself sufficiently suggestive. Thus, in Galsworthy's *Fraternity,* when Martin and Thyme make their pilgrimages to Hound Street and the London slums, Thyme is offended by the smells; there is, however, little said directly descriptive of the odors. Instead, in one case, we hear Thyme asking at her first opportunity, "May we open the window, Mrs. Hughes? . . . Or will it hurt the baby?" And again, we see her going down Hound Street clutching Martin's eucalyptus-scented handkerchief in her hand ready for application. Likewise, in Manzoni's *The Betrothed,* throughout the descriptions of the terrible plague of Milan, where all is death and corruption, there is scarcely a mention of odors. We are, to be sure, told that "more than one sense was only too grievously incommoded and offended by the tokens and relics of recent habitation"—but when we read that the people moving

about in the streets carried in one hand "perfumed pastils, or little balls of metal and wood, perforated and filled with sponges steeped in aromatic vinegar, which they applied from time to time, as they went along, to their noses, or held there continually," we imagine vividly enough the condition of the polluted air. Any number of adjectives describing the odors hanging over this plague-infested spot might have accomplished much less.

EXERCISES

1. Count Fosco in Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White* is described by Walter de la Mare as "the fat, catlike, but impeccable husband of Lady Fosco." Put into a sentence your own impression of a half-dozen characters, part of them from books, part from real life. Label each description from the point of view of the method you have used.

2. Tabulate the means of description in the following selections concerned with Oxford; then write your impression of your own college town.

> The world, surely, has not another place like Oxford; it is a despair to see such a place and ever to leave it, for it would take a lifetime and more than one, to enjoy it satisfactorily. (N. Hawthorne)

> This Oxford, I have no doubt, is the finest city in the world—it is all of old Gothic buildings, spires, towers, quadrangles, cloisters, groves, &c., and is surrounded with more clear streams than ever I saw together. (John Keats, 1817)

> A vision of grey-roofed houses and a long winding street and the sound of many bells.
>
> Beautiful city! so venerable, so lovely, so serene! steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age: adorable dreamer, whose heart has been so romantic, home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loy-

alties! what example could ever so inspire us, what teacher could ever so save us? (Matthew Arnold, Preface to *Essays in Criticism*)

It was a windy, whispering, moonless night. After many turnings he came up to the first ancient mediæval pile that he had encountered. It was a college, as he could see by the gateway. Close to this college was another; and a little farther on another; and then he began to be encircled as it were with the breath and sentiment of the city. A bell began clanging, and he listened till a hundred and one strokes had sounded. He must have made a mistake, he thought; it was meant for a hundred. High against the black sky the flash of a lamp would show crocketed pinnacles and indented battlements. Down obscure alleys, apparently never trodden now by the foot of man, whose very existence seemed to be forgotten, there would jut out into the path porticoes, oriels, doorways of enriched and florid middle-age design. He began to be impressed with the isolation of his own personality. Seeming almost his own ghost, he gave his thoughts to the other ghostly presences with which the nooks were haunted. He saw that his destiny lay not with these, but among the manual toilers in the shabby purlieu which he himself occupied, unrecognised as part of the city at all by its visitors and panegyrists, yet without whose denizens the hard readers could not read nor the high thinkers live. (Thomas Hardy)

The elms are bare, the creepers die
  In scarlet on the wall:
It is a place of ghosts, and I
  Am ghostlier than all . . .

(St. John Lucas)

There is an air about it resonant of joy and hope: it speaks with a thousand tongues to the heart: it waves its mighty shadow over the imagination: it stands in lovely sublimity on the hill of ages, and points with prophetic

fingers to the sky: it greets the eager gaze from afar, with glistening spires and pinnacles adorned, that shine with an eternal light as with the lustre of setting suns; and a dream and a glory hover round its head, as the spirits of former times, a throng of intellectual shapes, are seen retreating or advancing to the eye of Memory: its streets are paved with the names of learning that can never wear out: its green quadrangles breathe the silence of thought, conscious of the weight of yearnings innumerable after the past, of loftiest aspirations for the future: Isis babbles of the Muses, its waters are from the springs of Helicon, its Christ Church meadows classic Elysian fields. (William Hazlitt)

3. Study the following descriptive extracts from the point of view of method and the effectiveness with which that method is used to secure the desired results:

She comes
In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
On the fore-finger of an alderman,
Drawn with a team of little atomies
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep;
Her wagon-spokes made of long spinners' legs;
The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
The traces, of the smallest spider's web;
The collars, of the moonshine's watery beams;
Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash of film;
Her wagoner, a small gray-coated gnat,
Not half so big as a round little worm
Prick'd from the lazy finger of a maid;
Her chariot is an empty hazel-nut,
Made by the joiner squirrel, or old grub,
Time out of mind the fairies' coach-makers.
And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;
O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on court'sies straight;
O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees.

—*Romeo and Juliet.*

Come on, sir; here's the place; stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis, to cast one's eyes so low!
The crows and choughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles; half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade!
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head;
The fishermen, that walk upon the beach,
Appear like mice; and yond tall anchoring bark,
Diminished to her cock; her cock, a buoy
Almost too small for sight; the murmuring surge,
That on the unnumber'd idle pebbles chafes,
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

—*King Lear.*

VI

Presenting Scenes—Graphic Description

Graphic description is the vivid pictorial presentation of a scene of action. Partly because of its importance, partly because of its peculiar nature, this type of description requires separate notice. Such events as a fire, a fight, a train wreck or a riot lend themselves readily to graphic description. A young lady spending the summer of 1927 in Vienna, for instance, wrote a vivid account of the mob scenes in the June uprising. There is, as a rule, considerable narrative in such a description, but the end is pictorial. Classic examples of graphic description will at once occur to us, if we but give the matter a thought: the assault upon the castle in *Ivanhoe,* the startling appearance of Highland tartan and spear in response to Roderick Dhu's whistle in *The Lady of the Lake,* the arena scene in *Quo Vadis,* the chariot race in *Ben Hur,* the burning ship in *Youth,* the night heath scene in *The Return of the Native,*

Dostoievsky's day in court in *The Brothers Karamazov,* the trial in Tolstoi's *The Resurrection.* Some of these may seem a little overdone, to suit all tastes, but they definitely illustrate the principle. Among more recent writings, one may name René Maran's remarkable description of the ganza dance, the storm, and the hunt, in *Batouala;* the cock-fight, the horse race, or one of the battles in *Drums;* the final bull-fight in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises;* the snow-storm in Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth;* or the various scenes of conflict and destruction in T. E. Lawrence's *Revolt in the Desert*—notably the picture of carnage at the wrecking of the train at Mudowwara.

There is space here for only a few examples of such descriptions. The illustrations selected may show, however, something of the range of possibilities in presenting scenes.

Professor Walter Raleigh has left us in his *Letters* a bit on a prize fight, notable for the volume of suggestion in a very small space:

> Did I tell you I went to see a boxing tournament, Oxford versus the Army, before I got ill? I liked it. I dare say I could take you some day, if you like. It was rather bluggy at times, but the fighters all had supper together in great content and peace. There were two or three girls there; they ate sweets and looked at the other spectators all the time.

In his presentation of Mrs. Baines leaving St. Luke's Square, Arnold Bennett has painted a vivid and unforgettable portrait from the dramatic milieu of daily life:

> Old houses, in the course of their history, see sad sights, and never forget them . . . and the triple house of John Baines saw such on the morning before the afternoon when Mr. and Mrs. Povey returned from their honeymoon—the sight of Mrs. Baines getting into the waggonette for Axe. Mrs. Baines, encumbered with trunks

and parcels, leaving the scene of her struggles and her defeat, whither she had once come, slim as a wand, to return stout, and heavy and heavy-hearted, to her childhood, content to live with her grandiose sister until such time as she should be ready for burial. . . . The grimy and impassive old house perhaps heard her saying, "Only yesterday they were little girls, ever so tiny—and now ——!" The driving off of a waggonette can be a dreadful thing.

—*The Old Wives' Tale.*

In the briefest space imaginable, Galsworthy gives us an almost perfect picture of a typical street scene in London—or any big city—at a rush hour:

They had come, however, to a policeman holding up a hand against the nose of a van horse, so that everything marked time. The engines of the cars whirred idly, their drivers' faces set toward the space withheld from them; a girl on a bicycle looked vacantly about her, grasping the back of a van, where a youth sat sideways with his legs stretched out toward her.

—*The White Monkey.*

Here is a picture of a burning straw-rick in Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd:*

This before Gabriel's eyes was a rick of straw, loosely put together, and the flames darted into it with lightning swiftness. It glowed on the windward side, rising and falling in intensity like the coal of a cigar. Then a superincumbent bundle rolled down with a whisking noise; flames elongated, and beat themselves about with a quiet roar, but no crackle. Banks of smoke went off horizontally at the back like passing clouds, and behind these burned hidden pyres, illuminating the semi-transparent sheet of smoke to a lustrous yellow uniformity. Individual straws in the foreground were consumed in a creeping movement of ruddy heat, as if they were knots of red worms, and above shone imaginary fiery faces, tongues hanging from lips, glaring eyes, and other impish forms, from which at intervals sparks flew in clusters like birds from a nest.

In his *Falk,* Joseph Conrad has left a memorable picture of an unusual event at sea:

The white tug careered out into the middle of the river. The red floats of her paddle-wheels revolving with mad rapidity tore up the whole reach with foam. The *Diana* in mid-stream waltzed with as much grace as an old barn, and flew after her ravisher. Through the ragged fog of smoke driving headlong upon the water I had a glimpse of Falk's square motionless shoulders under a white hat as big as a cart-wheel, of his red face, his yellow staring eyes, his great beard. Instead of keeping a lookout ahead, he was deliberately turning his back on the river to glare at his tow. The tall heavy craft, never so used before in her life, seemed to have lost her senses; she took a wild sheer against her helm, and for a moment came straight at us, menacing and clumsy, like a runaway mountain. She piled up a streaming, hissing, boiling wave half-way up her blunt stem, my crew let out one great howl,—and then we held our breaths. It was a near thing. But Falk had her! He had her in his clutch. I fancied I could hear the steel hawser ping as it surged across the Diana's forecastle, with the hands on board of her bolting away from it in all directions. It was a near thing. Hermann, with his hair rumpled, in a snuffy flannel shirt and a pair of mustard-coloured trousers, had rushed to help with the wheel. I saw his terrified round face; I saw his very teeth uncovered by a sort of ghastly fixed grin; and in a great leaping tumult of water between the two ships the *Diana* whisked past so close that I could have flung a hair-brush at his head. . . . Meanwhile Mrs. Hermann sat placidly on the skylight, with a woollen shawl on her shoulders. The excellent woman in response to my indignant gesticulations fluttered a handkerchief, nodding and smiling in the kindest way imaginable. The boys, only half dressed, were jumping about the poop in great glee, displaying their gaudy braces; and Lena in a short scarlet petticoat, with peeled elbows and thin bare arms, nursed the rag-doll with devotion. The whole family passed before my sight as if dragged across a scene of unparalleled violence. The last I saw was Hermann's niece with the baby Hermann in her arms standing apart from the others. . . . And then the four cottage windows of the *Diana* came into view retreating swiftly down

the river. The sashes were up, and one of the white calico curtains was fluttered straight out like a streamer above the agitated water of the wake.

EXERCISES

1. In Turgenev's *A Lear of the Steppes* there is a remarkable description of a scene in which a powerful man, outraged by the cruel treatment he has received from his ungrateful daughters, tears a house to pieces bit by bit and perishes in the ruins. Read this and compare it with the examples of graphic description given or mentioned above.

2. Write a graphic description of the most thrilling thing you have seen—a storm, a wreck, a fight, a fire.

3. In his *Life and Letters,* Lafcadio Hearn describes a bat in his room at night. The piece is remarkable for its imagery resulting from some unusually fine picture-making words, and for its singleness of effect—that silent, eerie effect of an almost shadowlike visitation of some unholy thing. This last is the more to be admired in that it is not expressed, only subtly suggested:

> Just after I wrote you last night, something began to whiffle quite soundlessly round my head: I saw only a shadow, and I turned down the gas, remembering that he who extinguisheth his light so that insects may not perish therein, shall, according to the book of Laotse, obtain longer life and remission of sins. Then it struck me with its wings so heavily that I knew it was a bat,—for no bird could fly so silently; and I turned up the gas again,—full. There it was!—very large,—circling round and round the ceiling so swiftly that I felt dizzy trying to turn to keep it in sight,—and as noiselessly as its own shadow above it. I could not tell which was the shadow and which the life, —until both came together at last upon a ledge, and made a little peak-shouldered devilish thing with strangely twisted ears.

It is of interest to place beside this description of a bat, J. A. Symonds's account of his first sight of an ermine:

> I have just been called away from this writing to look at an ermine which has taken to haunt our woodhouse. It is a lovely little beast; pure white, with large black eyes, a black tip to its tail, and a shade of yellow on the rump and hind legs. I did not know they were a common European beast. This is exactly like the creature on my crest.
>
> —*Letters and Papers.*

With these examples fresh in your mind, describe some animal you have seen, or relate an incident suggested to you by Lafcadio Hearn's experience.

4. Study the following description, and then try your hand at an accurate and suggestive portrayal of some strikingly odd thing you have seen.

> The outstanding feature of Manchuria is certainly the little top-hat of the Korean colonist. I think it must be one of the only silly things left in this wise world. It is made of black, gauze-like stiff stuff which keeps out neither sun nor cold; it is almost exactly the same shape as a western top-hat and yet is about ten sizes too small, so that it wobbles and has to be tied on with ribbons under the chin. And to add to the wobble, the top-hat is worn on the top of an inner hat of the same gauzy texture. Under this idiotic tower of Babel, the Korean with his long wise sad face, and long wise beard with hoar-frost in it, maintains a look of profound dignity, even though he wears, round his long wise ears, to keep them warm, perky little rings of white rabbit-fur, like horse-radish frills round cold beef.
>
> —*Saturday Review of Literature,* Jan. 30, 1926.

5. Write a description in which you compare or contrast two people.

6. Write a description of an object, place, or landscape, in which you use analogy.

7. A girl described the effects of taking gas in this way:

> My mind was a thing apart from my body. It sat on a grey cloud in a grey void of nothingness, and detachedly watched seven little red devils hammering at a big white rock in a big reddish cave.

Try describing some such experience of your own.

8. Build up descriptively the surroundings for the person and the action presented in these lines:

> In her left hand a cup of gold she held,
> And with her right the riper fruit did reach,
> Whose sappy liquor, that with fulness swel'd,
> Into her cup she cruzed with dainty breach
> Of her fine fingers without foul impeach,
> That so fair wine-press made the wine more sweet.

VII

The Diction of Description

Amateurs in writing often seem to assume that the one workable rule for description is to deluge the page with quantities of adjectives and adverbs, especially adjectives: full-throated adjectives crying up every noun; puffy, vehement adverbs inflating every verb. But good descriptive effects are not secured in this way. There is, first of all, a danger of cluttering the mind of the reader with too many, or confused and indistinct images. Moreover, frequently only certain flat, tasteless effects result from the lack of restraint and discrimination shown in a plethora of words. What counts is the aptness and accuracy, not the number, of descriptive terms used.

In fact, it often happens that nouns and verbs standing alone in naked simplicity have powers of suggestion not to be equaled by any number of attached modifiers.

He who would learn to describe well must know his nouns and verbs. The great suggestive power of our *onomatopœic* words, most of them originally substantives

or verbs, is convincing evidence on this point. In such phrases as the *hiss* of a serpent, the *buzz* of a bee, the *whirr* of a motor, the *whiz* of a bullet, the *boom* of cannon, there is the utmost descriptive energy. Lafcadio Hearn uses the word *whiffle* in describing the flight of a bat in his room at night, "something began to *whiffle* quite soundlessly round my head." What better word than *whiffle* could be found to describe the all but silent movement of a flying bat? *Whiffle:* one *feels* rather than *hears* this sound. George Douglas Brown writes with like expressiveness, in *The House with the Green Shutters,* "There was the sharp *plunk* of a cork being drawn." In an equally felicitous phrase, Captain Thomason tells of the "barbaric *yapping*" of the Senegalese as they hurled themselves joyfully at the German trenches in a bayonet charge. In de Maupassant's *The Necklace,* poverty and much hard work have converted the very pretty Mme. Loisel, after ten years, into a rough, old-looking woman of the people. And in one eloquent sentence the great French artist pictures her to us:

> With frowsy hair, skirts askew, and red hands, she talked loud while washing the floor with great swishes of water.

There is everything in that sentence—all the bitter disappointment and hopeless resignation of one who, once ambitious and restless, had through one mistake wrecked her life. How admirably expressive is that word *swishes!* Into it the writer has compressed a suggestion of all the rue of a frustrated existence.

It is often, of course, combination with the right adjective that gives a noun its force. Thus, "In came Mrs. Fezziwig, one vast, substantial smile," is excellent description. The phrase "one vast, substantial smile" arouses exactly the right suggestion; we all know just how such *smiling* persons come in.

But the power of unqualified nouns and verbs yet re-

mains. The young student who began his narrative with the sentence, "An old woman sat alone in her room enduring the winter," packed into the one verbal *enduring* a load of connotation that another writer might have taken a paragraph to convey. *Enduring* contains the idea of cold and hunger; it suggests, too, a bare, cheerless basement room, poverty, rags, despair—a weary waiting for death as a release from an existence that has become too painful.

The exact nature of an action can often be best conveyed through the verb. So the writer with a sense for truth tells us whether the bird *darted* or *swooped,* or *flitted, floated, sailed,* or *flew;* and whether the man *walked* or *strolled,* or *rushed, ran,* or *burst,* into the room; whether the thief *stepped* or *darted* or *flung himself* into the alley.

"The battle *roared* into the wood," writes Captain Thomason, whose verbs are nearly always good. Equally effective are the verbals in the following, descriptive of an intense moment at Soissons: "It was every man for himself, an irregular, broken line, *clawing* through the tangles, *climbing* over fallen trees, *plunging* heavily into Boche rifle-pits." It is the unmistakable effectiveness of such language that would seem to justify Quintilian in saying, "The force of language lies in verbs." There are highly graphic verbs in the description from Hardy, page 642: "flames *darted* into it," "flames *elongated* and *bent* themselves," "sparks *flew* in clusters." And an even better illustration of the apt use of verbs is to be found in the selection from Conrad, page 643: "The white tug *careered* into the middle of the river"; her paddle wheels "*tore* up the whole reach with foam"; the *Diana waltzed* down the stream, and "*flew* after her ravishers"; "I could hear the steel hawser *ping* as it *surged* across the *Diana's* forecastle, with the hands . . . *bolting* away from it in all directions." And so one might go through the entire selection. These verbs are pictorial and dynamic; they

have life and movement and lifting power in them. Occasionally they have modifiers, it is true; but the real strength is not in the modifier; it is in the suggestive force of the verb itself. They have that largely because they are specific and concrete; and as we have seen in the chapter on Words, specific and concrete expression is usually the most suggestive—it creates imagery closely related to our sense experience.

Adjectives and Adverbs—Trite Phraseology.—Two good rules to remember in description are these: (1) Avoid unnecessary and too frequent use of adjectives and adverbs; (2) Avoid, whenever possible, trite, overworked adjectives and adverbs.

An instance of too many adjectives occurs in the following sentence from a student's theme:

> At this moment his *enraptured* gaze was suddenly drawn from the ladders of *sparkling* jewels above his head, to a *beautiful* lady who was stepping from a *superb* car before a *famous* theater.

Here the writer has evidently felt, quite mistakenly, that every noun, or nearly every one, should have its tag. The sentence appears at once to be just what it is, artificially overloaded, turgid. The random use of modifiers reduces to weakness, even those that are good.

In contrast, let us look at the following descriptive bit, in which the writer has used adjectives and adverbs a-plenty, but not indiscriminately:

> A well-grown boy of eighteen or nineteen, dressed in a shabby corduroy hunting suit, with a gun and gamebag, had climbed up from the marsh and was coming down the grove between the rows of trees. He was walking with a rude, arrogant stride, kicking at the twigs, and carried himself with unnatural erectness, as if he had a steel rod down his back. There was something defiant about the way he held his head. The visitor had put his gun and gamebag behind a tree and stood stiffly upright, surveying the group out of his narrow beady eyes and making them all uncomfortable. George

and Niel hated to look at Ivy, . . . and yet his face had a kind of fascination for them. It was red, and the flesh looked hard, as if it were swollen from bee-stings, or from an encounter with poison ivy. . . . Ivy's red skin was flecked with tiny freckles, like rust spots, and in each of his hard cheeks there was a curly indentation, like a knot in a tree-hole, . . . two permanent dimples which did anything but soften his face. His eyes were very small and an absence of eye-lashes gave his pupils the fixed, unblinking hardness of a snake's or a lizard's. His hands had the same swollen look as his face, were deeply creased across the back and knuckles, as if the skin were stretched too tight. He was an ugly fellow, Ivy Peters, and he liked being ugly.

—WILLA CATHER, *A Lost Lady.*

Examples of the overused, the "tired" phrase, as it has been aptly called, are frequent enough even in professional writing. The fault here, of course, is a willingness to accept a thing as it has been seen or heard by other people and to repeat their description of it, without searching out one's own distinctive reaction and finding an expression for it. Thus, old men's faces are *flabby* and *furrowed,* their cheeks *withered,* their eyes *sunken* and *faded,* their hands *quiver,* their faces *turn purple with rage;* likewise, in the description of young men and young women, sets of stock words and phrases stand ready-made for the literary borrower indolent enough to prefer the *cliché* to individual expression.

In descriptions of scenes it is especially easy to fall into the use of trite "literary" expression. The following from a student's theme is illustrative: "A *shrill* whistle blows, the mass of northward traffic *grinds* itself to a standstill, the *shrieking* of the *tortured* brakes is *drowned* by the *roar* of the *eager* motors. . . ." This is nearly all trite phraseology, and in these discerning critical days of ours at once brands the writer as an amateur.

A college student once wrote a story in which two young people were caught in a storm on a small Michigan river.

Evidently inspired by memories of ocean storms of Conrad, Dana, and others, she strove mightily to do justice to the situation. And what a description she produced! Under the impetus of her lively imagination, the storm became a typhoon, the tiny row-boat a considerable ship, the river a great raging sea of water. A few sentences picked almost at random will show how ludicrous such writing may become:

The wind in great roaring billows rolled toward them from all sides, making a mighty torrent of the once peaceful river.

The small boat pitched and dove up and over the giant undulations.

A stifling blackness had fallen, smothering all those who tried to escape.

She had better crawl up to Jim's end of the boat. She could see him up there now—on top of the wave. She seemed so far below him.

The noise numbed her thoughts. They must be in the very middle of the vortex of the storm. She would try to walk to Jim. Her end of the boat seemed to drop, it was sinking by steady lowerings into the bottom of the abyss. She screamed to Jim as she tried to rise in the boat, throwing her arms wildly into the sky. A jerk sent her headlong to the bottom of the craft again. The elements became more violent than before. Her clothes were being torn from her. Mighty stones were falling all about. She could hear them hit the water, and feel them upon her body. [All this in a rowboat!]

And so on and on, to the wreck, the fainting, and the gallant rescue.

The tragic part is that this sort of thing often passes for good writing. And yet there is no truth in it, nothing but jumbled literary borrowings from half a dozen accounts of sea storms which this student had sometime read. What is needed is a steady eye to the object, and an imaginative[1] portrayal of what might actually take place in such a situation in life.

[1] *Imaginative* here has reference here to insight.

Ruskin condemns the so-called *pastoral* poetry of the mid-eighteenth century, as poetry "written in praise of the country by men who lived in coffee-houses and on the Mall." [1] In this inevitably artificial pastoral verse "a farmer's girl is spoken of as a 'nymph,' a farmer's boy as a 'swain,'" and "throughout, a ridiculous and unnatural refinement is supposed to exist in rural life, merely because the poet himself has neither had the courage to endure its hardships, nor the wit to conceive its realities," complains Ruskin. You will find nearly all this poetry expressing "either a foolish sentimentality or a morbid fear, both of course coupled with the most curious ignorance. You will find all its descriptive expressions at once vague and monotonous. Brooks are always 'purling'; birds are always 'warbling'; mountains always 'lift their horrid peaks above the clouds'; vales always 'are lost in the shadow of gloomy woods.'" In all this "general waste of dullness," what strikes one most forcibly is a "strange deadness to the higher sources of landscape sublimity," says Ruskin.

This same deadness and dullness and vague blur is to be found in all writing that is merely "literary." There can be no other possible result from artistic slovenliness that contents itself with neither seeing its object clearly nor expressing it with sincere accuracy.

Now, good descriptive writing is neither blurred by indistinct perceptivity nor rendered vague through the empty repetition of book words and phrases chosen because others have used them. Nor is it marred by straining for effect. Instead, it is usually simple, direct, and effortless, with the fresh tang of individuality upon it, and a consequent flavor of truth.

Those of us who have read many war stories have become familiar with the conventional phraseology descriptive of the battlefront, the "roar" of the big guns, the

[1] *Lectures on Architecture and Painting,* Lecture III.

"shriek" of missiles through the air, the "crash" of exploding shells. But occasionally there comes a writer who displays something more than the capacity of a phonograph record to repeat what has been endlessly said. He has really searched out the exact phrases that tell how it sounded to *him*. An example of this type of description is found in the following extract. To be sure, the word *crash* occurs, but it is particularized; we are told just what sort of crash it was. The description of the sound of machine gun fire is delightfully individual; it is certainly taken from no book.

> The distance was thudding heavily. The horizon was loose perhaps, and was bumping the earth. . . . As we neared the farm there was a crash, as though a boiler plate had fallen from a great height onto paving stones. . . .
>
> The ugly but intermittent sounds were not so distant as they had been when we reached another group of farm buildings scattered among plantations near a road crossing. The trees about them were motionless in the sleeping afternoon, as though guarding a secret. . . . From somewhere not so far away there came a noise which might have been of an idle boy rattling a stick along a fence. An officer, to my surprise, came to the door of a barn which I had thought was empty. "Come in," he cried. "They spray that road with a machine gun. Can't you hear it?"
>
> —H. M. Tomlinson, *Illusions*.

Captain Thomason's *Fix Bayonets* has been praised for its unusually convincing and vivid portrayal of the war scene in France. Here one finds descriptive passages admirable for their distinctive imagery, a result possible only where the writer has found ways of his own to describe things he has himself carefully observed. Captain Thomason's writing is not faultless, but he makes his reader hear and see and *feel*. Here are some examples of his work: A French battery of 75's is shelling an advancing German column:

The first 75 barked, clear and incisive, and the shell whined away . . . the next gun and the next. . . . The little puff-balls, ranging shots, burst very near the Boche column. Then the battery fired as one gun—a long rafale of fire, wherein no single gun could be heard, but a drumming thunder.

Smoke and fire flowered hideously over the Boche column. A cloud hit it for a space. When the cloud lifted the column had disintegrated: there was only a far-off swarm of fleeing figures, flailed by shrapnel as they ran. And the grass showed squirming heaps of gray flattened on the ground.

At Blanc Mont, the Marines, at the end of a terrible, costly advance, reach the German lines:

Behind and to the left the machine guns still raved, but the artillery fell away. A greenish rocket flared from the pines ahead, and right in the faces of the panting Marines machine-guns and rifles blazed. In the shadow of the pines were men in cumbersome green-gray uniforms, with faces that looked hardly human under deep round helmets. With eyes narrowed, bodies slanting forward like men in heavy rain, the remnant of the battalion went to them.

This passage is admirable, especially the description of the German faces under the helmets, and the narrowed eyes and slanting bodies of the determined advancing Marines.

There are occasional airplane combats. In one of these,

. . . the lieutenant saw one low-flying fellow crumple and come down like a stricken duck.

At another time when a number of fighting planes appear we are told:

They were Boche—sinister red-nosed machines that came out of the eye of the sun and harrowed the flattened infantry, swooping one after another with bursts of machine-gun fire.

In these descriptive passages one feels that the writer has sincerely tried to find words to express his sense experience in its particularity. He is not interested in the way

others have said similar things; his concern is with words that will best match what he himself has seen and heard. And this is one of the secrets of successful description that young writers should always remember.

EXERCISES

1. Study and comment on the verbs in this passage descriptive of a scene at a vivid moment in Walpole's *Cathedral*. Note especially the *dynamic* verbs. Mark the words—nouns, adjectives, or verbals—that denote color or light or form; that is, those which are *pictorial*.

> Suddenly the room was blazing with light. The Torch-light Procession tumbled into the Precincts. The Cathedral sprang into light; on all the hills the bonfires were blazing.
>
> Black figures scattered like dwarfs, pigmies, giants about the grass. The torches tossed and whirled and danced.
>
> The Cathedral rose from the darkness, triumphant in gold and fire.

2. Use the following verbs in groups of sentences in such a way as to show the shading of meaning possible to each one of them:

advance	stroll
run	grope
rush	feel (one's way)
walk	scuttle
lope	burst
gallop	hurl
trot	throw
creep	hurtle

Do the same for these nouns: voice, call, bark, cry, whine, shriek, howl, scream.

3. *Sounds*

(a) The following extracts contain examples of descriptions of sounds by three well-known masters. The first gives us an idea of what one may hear on a quiet night in the jungle; the second

is a description of the sounds of vesper time in a rural retreat; and the third has to do with the somewhat obscured sounds of an oriental ceremonial dance coming to one within doors. Study these carefully, and mark the most expressive descriptive words and phrases.

> We watched and called the ghostly kinkajous and held them fascinated with our stream of light; we roused unnamable creatures which squawked companionably at us and rustled the tree-top leaves; we listened to the whispered rush of passing vampires skimming our faces and were soothed by the hypnotic droning hum which beetles left in their swift wake. Finally we turned and circled through side trails so narrow and so dark that we walked with outstretched arms, feeling for the trunks.
>
> —William Beebe, *Jungle Night.*

> Regularly at half-past seven, in one part of the summer, after the evening train had gone by, the whippoorwills chanted their vespers for half an hour, sitting on a stump by my door, or upon the ridge pole of the house. They would begin to sing with almost as much precision as a clock, within five minutes of a particular time, referred to the setting of the sun, every evening. I had a rare opportunity to become acquainted with their habits. Sometimes I heard four or five at once in different parts of the wood, by accident one a bar behind another, and so near me that I distinguished not only the cluck after each note, but often that singular buzzing sound like a fly in a spider's web, only proportionally louder. Sometimes one would circle round and round me in the woods a few feet distant as if tethered by a string, when probably I was near its eggs. They sang at intervals throughout the night, and were again as musical as ever just before and about dawn.
>
> —Thoreau, *Sounds.*

> While the good soul is thus explaining I become aware of a strange remote sound from without, a sound I recognize through memory of tropical dances, a measured clap-

ping of hands. But this clapping is very soft and at long intervals. And at still longer intervals there comes to us a heavy muffled booming, the tap of a great drum, a temple drum.

—LAFCADIO HEARN, *The Dance of the Bon Odori.*

(b) Listen carefully in the morning before you get up for the sounds that come to you. Find the best possible words to describe these sounds and their effect upon you. Write a descriptive sketch entitled *Morning Sounds, Morning Echoes, Early Harmonies, The Dissonance of Dawn,* or whatever may be most appropriate to your experience.

(c) Do this for evening or night sounds also, either at home, in camp, or upon water, as the case may be.

(d) Try describing the sounds of some dance or festival you have attended, of some rally, game, or other public event.

(e) The sound of the airplane has been variously described. It is "like the humming of a million angry bees," wrote a student. In the *Revolt in the Desert,* by T. E. Lawrence, one reads of airplanes "clattering up across the sky," of "the song of the engine over the pass of Shtar," and of Turkish planes "humming overhead." Captain Thomason's ears detect a yet different note. "A dark, high plane came into view from the east; its motor filled the ear with a *deep vibrant droning, oddly ominous.*"

Listen carefully to the next airplane that passes, and describe the sounds as accurately as you can. Try the same for a squadron of planes.

(f) Listen to voices. Describe accurately the tonal quality of a dozen voices you have thus studied.

4. *Smell*

(a) Describe an odor that is particularly unpleasant to you.

(b) Likewise describe an odor that is pleasing to you.

(c) Describe a dozen odors you have encountered the past week.

5. Observe the colors of your sunset skies. Try to find words for every hue and shade.

6. Describe accurately the colors of dresses you see at your next party.

7. Can you describe suggestively the shape of a man's face or

his nose, or mouth? Experiment to find how well you can do such things.

8. Test yourself out in the same way on hills and mountains, trees, buildings, automobiles, ships, and so forth.

9. Study the tastes of different foods and drinks. Describe a dozen or so of these tastes.

10. Study some of your favorite descriptions. Some would furnish material for painters, others would not. Point out which would make successful pictures, which not, and tell why. Pick out the descriptions in this chapter that would be good material for a painter, which would not. Tell why.

11. Construct the following sentences into an effective descriptive paragraph. Give reasons for the arrangement you have chosen.

(a) Her bluish brown skin was almost the colour of her violet dinner dress.

(b) She had a pear-shaped face, and across her high forehead lay a row of flat, dry curls.

(c) Probably she had long been surrounded by people to whom she was an important personage, and had acquired the habit of a spoiled darling.

(d) A diamond necklace glittered about her wrinkled throat.

(e) Unlike Constance, she seemed thoroughly amiable, but as she talked she tilted her head and "used" her eyes, availing herself of those arch glances which he had supposed only pretty women indulged in.

(f) Mrs. Ogden was almost unpardonably homely.

12. Study the following extract from Kipling's *The Light that Failed*. Pick out examples of effective nouns and verbs.

> There was no need for any order. The men flung themselves panting against the sides of the square, for they had good reason to know that whoso was left outside when the fighting began would very probably die in an extremely unpleasant fashion. The little hundred-and-fifty-pound camel-guns posted at one corner of the square opened the ball as the square moved forward by its right to get possession of a knoll of rising ground. All had fought in this manner many times before, and there was no novelty in the entertainment; always the same hot and

stifling formation, the smell of dust and leather, the same bolt-like rush of the enemy, the same pressure on the weakest side of the square, the few minutes of desperate hand-to-hand scuffle, and then the silence of the desert, broken only by the yells of those whom the handful of cavalry attempted to pursue. They had grown careless. The camel-guns spoke at intervals, and the square slouched forward amid the protests of the camels. Then came the attack of three thousand men who had not learned from books that it is impossible for troops in close order to attack against breech-loading fire. A few dropping shots heralded their approach, and a few horsemen led, but the bulk of the force was naked humanity, mad with rage, and armed with the spear and the sword. The instinct of the desert, where there is always much war, told them that the right flank of the square was the weakest, for they swung clear of the front. The camel-guns shelled them as they passed, and opened for an instant lanes through their midst, most like those quick-closing vistas in a Kentish hop-garden seen when the train races by at full speed; and the infantry fire, held till the opportune moment, dropped them in close-packed hundreds. No civilized troops in the world could have endured the hell through which they came, the living leaping high to avoid the dying clutching at their heels, the wounded cursing and staggering forward till they fell—a torrent black as the sliding water above a mill-dam—full on the right flank of the square. Then the line of the dusty troops and the faint-blue desert sky overhead went out in rolling smoke, and the little stones on the heated ground and the tinder-dry clumps of scrub became matters of surpassing interest, for men measured their agonized retreat and recovery by these things, counting mechanically and hewing their way back to chosen pebble and branch. There was no semblance of any concerted fighting. For aught the men knew, the enemy might be attempting all four sides of the square at once. Their business was to destroy what lay in front of them, to bayonet in the back those who passed over them, and, dying, to drag down the slayer till

he could be knocked on the head by some avenging gun-butt. . . . There was a rush from without, the short *hough-hough* of the stabbing spears, and a man on a horse, followed by thirty or forty others, dashed through, yelling and hacking. The right flank of the square sucked in after them, and the other sides sent help. The wounded, who knew that they had but a few hours more to live, caught at the enemy's feet and brought them down, or, staggering to a discarded rifle, fired blindly into the scuffle that raged in the center of the square. Dick was conscious that somebody had cut him violently across his helmet, that he had fired his revolver into a black, foam-flecked face which forthwith ceased to bear any resemblance to a face, and that Torpenhow had gone down under an Arab whom he had tried to "collar low," and was turning over and over with his captive, feeling for the man's eyes. The doctor was jabbing at a venture with a bayonet, and a helmetless soldier was firing over Dick's shoulder; the flying grains of powder stung his cheek. It was to Torpenhow that Dick turned by instinct. The representative of the Central Southern Syndicate had shaken himself clear of his enemy, and rose, wiping his thumb on his trousers. The Arab, both hands to his forehead, screamed aloud, then snatched up his spear and rushed at Torpenhow, who was panting under shelter of Dick's revolver. Dick fired twice, and the man dropped limply. His upturned face lacked one eye. The musketry-fire redoubled, but cheers mingled with it. The rush had failed, and the enemy were flying. If the heart of the square were shambles, the ground beyond was a butcher's shop.

13. Read carefully Lowell's description below; then discuss "literary values" in descriptive writing.

The snow that falls damp comes commonly in larger flakes from windless skies, and is the prettiest of all to watch from under cover. This is the kind Homer had in mind; and Dante, who had never read him, compares the *dilatate falde,* the flaring flakes, of his fiery rain, to those

of snow among the mountains without wind. This sort of snowfall has no fight in it, and does not challenge you to a wrestle like that which drives well from the northward, with all moisture thoroughly winnowed out of it by the frosty wind. Burns, who was more out of doors than most poets, and whose barefoot Muse got the color in her cheeks by vigorous exercise in all weathers, was thinking of this drier deluge, when he speaks of the "whirling drift," and tells how

"Chanticleer
Shook off the powthery snaw."

But the damper and more deliberate falls have a choice knack at draping the trees; and about eaves or stone-walls, wherever, indeed, the evaporation is rapid, and it finds a chance to cling, it will build itself out in curves of wonderful beauty. I have seen one of these dumb waves, thus caught in the act of breaking, curl four feet beyond the edge of my roof and hang there for days, as if Nature were too well pleased with her work to let it crumble from its exquisite pause. After such a storm, if you are lucky enough to have even a sluggish ditch for a neighbor, be sure to pay it a visit. You will find its banks corniced with what seems precipitated light, and the dark current down below gleams as if with an inward lustre. Dull of motion as it is, you never saw water that seemed alive before. It has a brightness, like that of the eyes of some smaller animals, which gives assurance of life, but of a life foreign and unintelligible.

—LOWELL, *A Good Word for Winter.*

14. Transfer the following description of Martin Petrovitch Harlov, by Turgenev, into the form of "A Character" after the manner of John Earle. First, read several selections in Earle's *Microcosmographie*, or in Morley's *Character Writers of the Seventeenth Century*.

15. Study this description for suggestive diction, distinct imagery, and singleness of effect.

Picture to yourselves a man of gigantic stature. On his huge carcass was set, a little askew, and without the least trace of a neck, a prodigious head. A perfect haystack of tangled yellowish-gray hair stood up all over it, growing almost down to the bushy eyebrows. On the broad expanse of his purple face, that looked as though it had been peeled, there protruded a sturdy knobby nose; diminutive little blue eyes stared out haughtily, and a mouth gaped open that was diminutive, too, but crooked, chapped, and of the same color as the rest of the face. The voice that proceeded from this mouth, though hoarse, was exceedingly strong and resonant. . . . Its sound recalled the clank of iron bars, carried in a cart over a badly paved road; and when Harlov spoke, it was as though some one were shouting in a high wind across a wide ravine. It was difficult to tell just what Harlov's face expressed, it was such an expanse. . . . One felt one could hardly take it all in at one glance. But it was not disagreeable—a certain grandeur indeed could be discerned in it, only it was exceedingly astounding and unusual. And what hands he had—positive cushions! What fingers, what feet! I remember I could never gaze without a certain respectful awe at the four-foot span of Martin Petrovitch's back, at his shoulders, like millstones. But what especially struck me was his ears! They were just like great twists of bread, full of bends and curves; his cheeks seemed to support them on both sides. Martin Petrovitch used to wear—winter and summer alike—a Cossack dress of green cloth, girt about with a small Tcherkess strap, and tarred boots. I never saw a cravat on him, and indeed what could he have tied a cravat round? He breathed slowly and heavily, like a bull, but walked without a sound. One might have imagined that having got into a room, he was in constant fear of upsetting and overturning everything, and so moved cautiously from place to place, sideways for the most part, as though slinking by. He was possessed of a strength truly Herculean, and in consequence enjoyed great renown in the neighbourhood. Our common people retain to this day their reverence for

Titanic heroes. Legends were invented about him. They used to recount that he had one day met a bear in the forest and had almost vanquished him; that having once caught a thief in the beehouse, he had flung him, horse and cart and all, over the hedge, and so on. Harlov himself never boasted of his strength. "If my right hand is blessed," he used to say, "so it is God's will it should be!"

—*A Lear of the Steppes,* translated by Constance Garnett.

16. What is the author's *purpose* in the following description? What is his method? Study the description for the effective use of suggestive diction. Pick out the different sense images that are aroused in your mind as you read.

Neither angry, nor playful, nor smiling, it enveloped our distant ship growing bigger as she neared us, our boats with the rescued men and the dismantled hull of the brig we were leaving behind, in the large and placid embrace of its quietness, half lost in the fair haze, as if in a dream of infinite and tender clemency. There was no frown, no wrinkle on its face, not a ripple. And the run of the slight swell was so smooth that it resembled the graceful undulation of a piece of shimmering grey silk shot with gleams of green. We pulled an easy stroke; but when the master of the brig, after a glance over his shoulder, stood up with a low exclamation, my men feathered their oars instinctively, without an order, and the boat lost her way.

He was steadying himself on my shoulder with a strong grip, while his other arm, flung up rigidly, pointed a denunciatory finger at the immense tranquillity of the ocean. After his first exclamation, which stopped the swing of our oars, he made no sound, but his whole attitude seemed to cry out an indignant "Behold!" . . . I could not imagine what vision of evil had come to him. I was startled, and the amazing energy of his immobilized gesture made my heart beat faster with the anticipation of something monstrous and unsuspected. The stillness around us became crushing.

For a moment the succession of silky undulations ran on innocently. I saw each of them swell up the misty line of the horizon, far, far away beyond the derelict brig, and the next moment, with a slight friendly toss of our boat, it had passed under us and was gone. The lulling cadence of the rise and fall, the invariable gentleness of this irresistible force, the great charm of the deep waters, warmed my breast deliciously, like the subtle poison of a love-potion. But all this lasted only a few soothing seconds before I jumped up, too, making the boat roll like the veriest landlubber.

Something startling, mysterious, hastily confused was taking place. I watched it with incredulous and fascinated awe, as one watches the confused, swift movements of some deed of violence done in the dark. As if at a given signal, the run of the smooth undulations seemed checked suddenly around the brig. By a strange optical delusion the whole sea appeared to rise upon her in one overwhelming heave of its silky surface where in one spot a smother of foam broke out ferociously. And then the effort subsided. It was all over, and the smooth swell ran on as before from the horizon in uninterrupted cadence of motion, passing under us with a slight friendly toss of our boat. Far away, where the brig had been, an angry white stain undulating on the surface of steely-grey waters, shot with gleams of green, diminished swiftly without a hiss, like a patch of pure snow melting in the sun. And the great stillness after this initiation into the sea's implacable hate seemed full of dread thoughts and shadows of disaster.

—Conrad, *The Mirror of the Sea.*

Chapter XIV

NARRATIVE WRITING

Each owes it to his fellows to tell as best he may, or, better still, to write with fair enticing words, such deeds and adventures as are good and profitable for us to know. For as men come and go about their business in the world, many things are told them which it is seemly to keep in remembrance.—BERNIER.

I

WHILE everyone loves a good story and does as well at story-telling as he is able, most of us content ourselves in our attempts at story-telling with giving to our friends accounts of our successes and failures in travel, sport, and business, or in retelling humorous anecdotes. Commonly our accounts have no purpose except to entertain our listeners or correspondents. At other times, their purpose is to give information to our business associates or to the members of our families. Again, our accounts may be used so as to convey instructions, to illustrate abstract ideas, or to enforce moral precepts. Sometimes, when we are not required to stick to facts, we may make our stories more impressive by adding details which our imaginations supply. Our imaginations may even supply the entire fabric. Whatever the method or purpose, narration is immensely popular and important.

Narration is the recounting of past events, or the orderly telling of a sequence of imaginary events: it is the rehearsal of a number of related happenings which, taken together, seem to form a complete unit. To tell a story means, literally, to recount known events, *tellan* in Old

English meaning *to count;* "story" being an abbreviated form of "history." Nowadays "history" means an account or record of actual deeds, while the word "story" is usually applied to accounts of imagined action—to invention.

To be more particular, a narrative is an account of any sequence of actions, real or imaginary, which together make up what we feel to be a unit: it is a series of incidents combined so as to form a pattern more or less complete in itself. A knowledge of the events which may have preceded the opening of our story is not necessary to the enjoyment of the piece; what may come after the end of our narrative would, as Kipling used to say, be "another story."

Pure narrative differs from exposition in that narrative presents persons in action for the interest which lies in the persons and in their collisions with each other, instead of in the abstract principles, the moral or physical laws, which the story may illustrate. As has been noted in a previous chapter, exposition of process (let us say the making of maple sugar, or the resuscitating of a drowning person) sets forth the succession of operations so that we may fix the knowledge of those operations and their sequence in mind. The knowledge may be satisfactory in itself, or it may be learned for a practical purpose. In any case, the facts told have been about typical things. There is no interest in any particular maple tree or in any particular drowning person. Yet, to make the learning of a process more attractive, we may emphasize the story element. We may send a party into the maple grove. We may dramatize the drowning and the rescue.

There are numerous border-line types of composition, and mixed types. There are fables, parables, and anecdotes which are told to make clear or to enforce moral or other truths. The fable of the fox and the grapes, Christ's parable of the vineyard, or almost any anecdote

used by public speakers to make a point, are examples which at once come to mind. In such cases the narrative is usually very good indeed, but it is not told for its own sake, but for the sake of the abstract truth or precept which the writer or speaker wishes to bring out. The purpose of such narrative is expository.

A narrative may be told largely for the sake of the description it contains. There are "travel stories" which have only occasional bits of narrative interest, published for the descriptions which they furnish of the men, manners, and scenes of strange or beautiful lands. Stevenson's *Inland Voyage* and Haliburton's *Royal Road to Romance* are examples. When the descriptive element is of scientific value, supplied by a trained observer, we get books such as Parkman's *Oregon Trail,* Thoreau's *Walden,* Burroughs' *Pepacton,* or Beebe's *Jungle Peace.* We do not, of course, consider a writer at fault because we find description or exposition in his narrative, or because we find narratives in his supposedly scientific exposition. So long as a writer has a well-defined purpose, he may use any form of discourse or any combination of forms which will aid him. But the main purpose must not be obscured. In reading narrative we do not like to be delayed with descriptions and explanations which are unnecessary to a complete realization of the action.

II

Materials: Principles of Selection

In narrative writing, as in every other sort of composition, one is confronted with the necessity of choosing a comparatively small number of details out of which to make his story. This is hardly less true of autobiographical writing than of fiction. What shall govern this choice? First, we must choose details which produce an air of

truth; and, secondly, we must choose details which can be woven together to produce a single and total and predetermined effect.

A story to succeed must so impress the reader that he can without reserve enter into the action; he must, at least while reading the story, be willing to regard the characters and their doings as real. Very strange and fanciful details, if skillfully presented, can be made to seem more true than actual facts clumsily handled. The details of Defoe's *Apparition of Mrs. Veal,* a ghost story, are presented through the testimony of people who seem so earnest in their belief that the reader can do no less than believe them. The criterion which should govern the writer is not: Did or could such a thing happen? Instead, the writer should ask himself: Can this be made to seem plausible? If one's readers are not convinced by a story, it does not help at all to inform them that the narrative has been based on an actual happening. Biography, history, stories of exploration can be stranger than fiction, because our belief can be secured through well-supported evidence, through faith in the character of the historian or explorer. But a footnote is of little value in fiction.

Our facts must not only be true to nature generally, but they must be true to the characters, and consistent with each other. They must be selected so that all irrelevant elements are left out; so that together they produce a dominant impression. Fiction writers like Poe and Hawthorne have been very particular about singleness of effect, as a reperusal of *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Great Stone Face* will show. Biographers and authors of books of travel are hardly less careful. In the following extract one gets an impression of scrupulous care for truth. One also feels that the author, while he does not belittle the dangers, aims to convince the reader that the rigors of the Arctic have been exaggerated.

On March 29, 1927, Wilkins and Eielson, in a land plane, mounted on skids and with gas for fourteen hours, started from Barrow, Alaska, three hundred miles north of the Arctic circle, on an intended triangular exploration flight of six hundred miles somewhat north of west, two hundred miles southwest, and then back to Barrow. They flew steadily for more than five hours, about five hundred and fifty miles. Then engine trouble developed, and a landing had to be made. Wilkins selected a spot he thought safe, and Eielson made a perfect landing. While Eielson worked on the engine, Wilkins made two holes in the ice for the use of the sonic depth finder. The ice was about three feet thick and the water beneath it proved to be about three miles deep.

During the flight the weather, fair at the start, had begun to turn cloudy, and a wind was increasing, blowing off the land. For winds do blow in the Arctic, though not so often as in the Temperate Zone, nor so violently on the average. With daylight lost in making repairs and fuel lost in taking off, Wilkins decided to head straight back to shore. The trip was already fruitful. They had flown three hundred miles beyond the limit of previous exploration, had disproved the view of those who believed land existed within five hundred miles northwest of Barrow, and had proved the ocean so deep that the probability of land even far off in that direction is greatly lessened. And they had made one safe landing on the pack with skids—an accomplishment of value in the face of the controversy, for at least you cannot say that no landing can be made after one has been made.

The take-off proved as safe and easy as the landing, and they flew straight back over their course, but with diminished speed, for the force of the head wind was increasing and the engine was not working well. In about ten minutes it got so bad that they had to come down. Again Wilkins picked what he thought was a safe spot, and again Eielson made a perfect landing. This time Wilkins took no sounding and both worked at the repairs, for the day was getting short, the wind had increased to a blizzard, and clouds had hidden the sun. The new-fallen snow, too, was a little soft and they had to make five attempts before the plane finally took the air. This used up precious daylight and more precious fuel, so that when finally under way Wilkins calculated that light would fail them two hundred miles, and the gasoline probably one

hundred miles, before reaching shore. He consulted Eielson. Should they make a safe landing in daylight or fly through the dark till the gas gave out, on the chance that it might after all last them back to land? Their calculations as to distance were very uncertain, as they did not know the force of the wind and how much it was delaying them. If the wind dropped, they might make land. Eielson voted for taking that chance.

Night was on, and they had been flying for two hours without seeing the ice below, the horizon in the distance, or any star or sign of moon in the sky above, when suddenly the engine stopped. Their fuel was all gone. Only from his instruments could Eielson judge how far below them was the ice. Through the dark of night and the murk of the blizzard they came to a third landing. Their machine stayed right side up, but a snag of ice broke one of the wings. Then, in the thick of the blizzard, Wilkins and Eielson got out their bedding and slept the night in fair comfort.[1]

Sometimes the appearance of truth is secured by the consistency of the facts of the story with each other. This is the case in fairy tales and fantasies. Swift's *Gulliver* is convincing largely because of the author's great skill in drawing everything in Lilliput and Brobdingnag to a carefully worked-out scale. He is so exact about dimensions and details that we scarcely doubt him.

The empire of Blefuscu is an island, situated to the north-east side of Lilliput, from whence it is parted only by a channel of eight hundred yards wide. I had not yet seen it, and upon this notice of an intended invasion, I avoided appearing on that side of the coast, for fear of being discovered by some of the enemy's ships, who had received no intelligence of me, all intercourse between the two empires having been strictly forbidden during the war, upon pain of death, and an embargo laid by our Emperor upon all vessels whatsoever. I communicated to his Majesty a project I had formed of seizing the enemy's whole fleet: which, as our scouts assured us, lay at anchor in the harbour ready to sail with the first fair wind. I consulted the most experienced seamen upon the depth of the channel, which they had often plumbed, who told me,

[1] STEFANSSON, "The Airplane and the Arctic," *Harper's,* October, 1927.

that in the middle, at high water, it was seventy glumgluffs deep, which is about six feet of European measure; and the rest of it fifty glumgluffs at most. I walked towards the north-west coast, over against Blefuscu; where, lying down behind a hillock, I took out my small perspective glass, and viewed the enemy's fleet at anchor, consisting of about fifty men-of-war, and a great number of transports: I then came back to my house, and gave order (for which I had a warrant) for a great quantity of the strongest cable and bars of iron. The cable was about as thick as pack-thread, and the bars of the length and size of a knitting needle. I trebled the cable to make it stronger, and, for the same reason, I twisted three of the iron bars together, bending the extremities into a hook. Having thus fixed fifty hooks to as many cables, I went back to the north-east coast, and putting off my coat, shoes, and stockings, walked into the sea, in my leathern jerkin, about an hour before high water. I waded with what haste I could, and swam in the middle about thirty yards, till I felt ground; I arrived to the fleet in less than half an hour. The enemy was so frighted when they saw me, that they leaped out of their ships, and swam to shore, where there could not be fewer than thirty thousand souls. I then took my tackling, and, fastening a hook to the hole at the prow of each, I tied all the cords together at the end. While I was thus employed, the enemy discharged several thousand arrows, many of which stuck in my hands and face: and, besides the excessive smart, gave me much disturbance in my work. My greatest apprehension was for mine eyes, which I should have infallibly lost, if I had not suddenly thought of an expedient. I kept among other little necessaries a pair of spectacles in a private pocket, which, as I observed before, had escaped the Emperor's searchers. These I took out and fastened as strongly as I could upon my nose, and, thus armed, went on boldly with my work in spite of the enemy's arrows, many of which struck against the glasses of my spectacles, but without any other effect, farther than a little to discompose them. I had now fastened all the hooks, and, taking the knot in my hand, began to pull, but not a ship would stir, for they were all too fast held by their anchors, so that the boldest part of my enterprise remained. I therefore let go the cord, and leaving the hooks fixed to the ships, I resolutely cut with my knife the cables that fastened the anchors, receiving above two hundred shots

in my face and hands; then I took up the knotted end of the cables to which my hooks were tied, and with great care drew fifty of the enemy's largest men-of-war after me.

EXERCISES

Examine one or more of the following works (1) for truth of detail and (2) for unity of effect:

Defoe, *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal*
——*Journal of the Plague Year*
de Maupassant, *A Piece of String*
——*The Necklace*
Hawthorne, *Dr. Heidegger's Experiment*
Stevenson, *Markheim*
Poe, *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*
Carroll, *Through the Looking-glass*
Swift, *The Voyage to Brobdingnag*

III

Narrative Purpose

Granting that every narrative should aim at a single and total effect, the writer, especially of fiction, must determine whether he wants to produce a story that is for entertainment or one that has some practical value. Most persons are of the opinion that stories have a right to exist, to be told, in and for themselves; that the only legitimate demand which we can make of a story is that it be a good story. Most people merely ask that a story shall be a vivid presentation of seemingly real people in an engrossing series of actions, so managed as to hold the attention and deeply stir the emotions. The reading of narrative is an imaginary participation in action. When one reads of exciting events he projects his personality into the story and thus becomes a vicarious actor in it. But readers do this only when the story is well told. The

Old Testament narratives, *Le Morte D'Arthur,* Macaulay's *History of England* are valued as literature partly because of the intense human experience which is revealed in them, yet the bare stories clumsily managed would have little value. Story-tellers must have a comprehensive knowledge of life, but without skill in the selection and arrangement of material they would be unable to interest us.

Even though the aim of the writer is merely to tell a good story, yet if his story is one of intense conflict, revealing the inmost thoughts and motives of the contending characters, the story is certain to make the reader think. He is very likely to reach certain practical or moral conclusions. In some instances, the writer may be quite specific in his aim. He may, like Swift, wish to impress a definite moral idea upon the public and write his story so as to achieve this purpose. Writers with keen social sympathies may see the need of certain reforms: The system of gambling on the stock market may seem to be a wicked waste; the labor conditions in the Chicago stockyards may be very bad; the success of modern women in making "careers" for themselves must mean a corresponding failure in the rearing of their children; prohibition can be nothing but a farce so long as it gets no real support from the lawmakers and administrative officers at Washington. These are a few of the moral ideas which have exercised novelists within the past years. These novelists hoped by impressing certain facts upon the public consciousness to bring about necessary reforms, or reforms which seemed to them to be necessary. They chose the narrative form partly because that form is easiest to read. Often such "thesis" stories have been extraordinarily popular.

Any narrative which has a purpose other than to entertain must of necessity be of a practical nature. We may therefore speak of *pure* or *artistic narrative* and of

practical narrative. In pure narrative, while we may learn much about life and about social relationships, we do not feel that the author is trying to make us accept a definite attitude toward any social problem; he is not trying to get us to use our influence to bring about reforms. All narrative should enlarge our mental horizons and hence broaden our sympathies; it should make us more tolerant. But in the artistic narrative the writer's aim is merely to tell his story. It is only when a writer attempts to teach a specific doctrine or to influence our conduct in a definite way that we consider his narrative to be of a moral or practical nature.

Narrative which is entirely factual, which traces the actions of real people, past or present, may also be called practical narrative if its aim is to increase knowledge. History, biography, and news stories are examples of practical narrative.

Whether or not a story, of fact or fiction, has a thesis, a practical purpose, it must have a *theme.* The events or actions which we have chosen to present, however closely interlocked they may be, unless they produce a single and total effect, do not make up a narrative whole. It is only when all the details, however great their number, combine to present some basic motivation, impulse, or conception that we have singleness of effect and a unified theme. Thus the theme of Turgenev's *A Lear of the Steppes* is filial ingratitude; that of Mérimée's *Mateo Falcone* is unwavering devotion to clan and the laws of hospitality; of Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart,* the treachery of a guilty conscience; of Katherine Mansfield's *The Fly,* the oblivion brought by time. In writing the history of an age or of a decade, the writer will be able to produce nothing coherent unless he can see a dominant trait which makes the years about which he is writing a unit and gives them a total meaning. The decade 1890 to 1900 may or may not be *The Mauve Decade*—"pink trying

to be purple"; it may be equally incorrect to call the same period *The Romantic '90's*. Yet these titles reveal that in each work the author wrote with a definite point of view; each writer had a central idea which gave unity to his book.

The autobiographies which students are asked to write are often unsuccessful because the student makes no effort to find the central idea in his own life, the dominant trait in his own character, or the most powerful influence which has molded his character. There usually are certain moral traits or defects, such as inquisitiveness, egotism, cowardice, hatred of restraint, capacity for friendship, a taste for books, or art, or music; there are usually environmental influences which foster either the best that is in one or the worst, such as too much freedom, coddling, unsympathetic parents, lack of suitable companions, poverty, too much money. The tracing of one's dominant trait, good or bad, will not only give a central thread to a narrative, but it will supply a theme as well. Unity will therefore be assured. Note the central thought brought out in the following narrative paragraph:

I was the only one of the ten children who, as Father said, "took to larnin," though in seventy-five years of poring over books and periodicals I have not become "learned." But I easily distanced the other children in school. The others barely learned to read and write and cipher a little, Curtis and Wilson barely that, Hiram got into Greenleaf's Grammar and learned to parse, but never to write or speak correctly, and he ciphered nearly through Dayball's Arithmetic. I went through Dayball and then Thompkins and Perkins and got well on in algebra in the district school. My teacher, however, when I was about thirteen or fourteen, did not seem much impressed by my aptitude, for I recall that he told other scholars, boys and girls of about my own age, to get them each a grammar, but did not tell me. I felt a little slighted but made up my mind I would have a grammar also. Father refusing to buy it for me, I made small cakes of maple sugar in the spring and,

peddling them in the village, got money enough to buy the grammar and other books. The teacher was a little taken back when I produced my book as the others did theirs, but he put me in the class and I kept along with the rest of them, but without any idea that the study had any practical bearing on our daily speaking and writing. That teacher was a superior man, a graduate of the state normal school at Albany, but I failed to impress him with my scholarly aptitudes, which certainly were not remarkable. But long afterward, when he read some of my earlier magazine articles, he wrote to me, asking if I were indeed his early farm boy pupil. His interest and commendation gave me rare pleasure. I had at last justified that awkward intrusion into his grammar class.

—BURROUGHS, *My Boyhood.*

Narratives, then, may be the recounting of actual happenings, they may be wholly imaginary, or they may be woven out of a combination of fact and fancy. If stories, whether factual or not, are told merely to entertain, they are, if well done, called artistic stories. If they are told to increase our information, or to interpret facts for us, or to enforce a thesis, we may say that they are narratives having a practical value. All narrative must have "theme" or central idea or tone, or it will lack unity. All narrative, to be worth the reading, must have the power to engage the attention and to stir our emotions; it must be entertaining.

EXERCISES

1. How many of the following works have a practical purpose or aim?

Dickens, *Oliver Twist*
Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle*
A. S. M. Hutchinson, *This Freedom*
Mrs. Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*
O. Henry, *Mammon and the Archer*
——*The Gift of the Magi*

Shakespeare, *Othello*
Green, *A Short History of England*
Parkman, *The Oregon Trail*
Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*
Stefansson, *The Friendly Arctic*
Carlyle, *Essay on Burns*
Gibbon, *Autobiography*
Le Gallienne, *The Romantic '90's*

2. What is the *thesis* or *theme* of each of the preceding narratives with which you are familiar? Express it in a sentence.

3. Read a number of fables. Note the very obvious theme or thesis of each. Tell why each fable is or is not a good example of narrative. Does the expository element injure the story?

IV

The Physical Point of View

The mental point of view, as we said, requires penetrative insight, understanding of men and of affairs. Profound discernment of this sort is a mark of genius. All the great historians, the great biographers, the great fiction writers have had a distinct mental point of view. They do not agree with each other, to be sure, but there is some truth in all those works which after long years are still widely read.

There are also physical points of view which the writer of narrative must understand.

Oldest and simplest of the forms illustrating the physical point of view of the narrator is the story told in the first person. The story-teller may be (1) the principal character, (2) a subordinate character, or (3) a spectator of the action. Each of these forms has advantages. All of the first-person forms have greater verisimilitude than other types. They are convincing, because it seems

as if we are getting an account of an actual event from a participator and eyewitness. This seeming authenticity of the account helps to disarm criticism and to make us more ready to accept the improbable. The disadvantages of these forms should also be noticed.

When the story-teller is the chief character in the action there is always danger that his account of his brave and heroic deeds will make him seem boastful, and that the modern reader will lose sympathy with him. In heroic ancient days boasting was no fault; in fact, among the Anglo-Saxons boasting was part of the entertainment at the feast. In stories of older and supposedly more heroic days we find a certain charm in tall talk; we would not change the egotistic narrative of Benvenuto Cellini, for instance. But since we have acquired modesty, boasting is frowned upon. In the modern first-person story, therefore, the story-teller is usually a minor character or a spectator. Conan Doyle had Dr. Watson tell of the wonderful achievements of Sherlock Holmes. In *Henry Esmond* there is an interesting, though not wholly successful, attempt to overcome the difficulty of having the hero tell of his own heroic exploits and renunciation. Esmond tells his own story but never uses the first-person pronoun. He refers to himself as "Esmond," as if someone else were telling the story. Yet some of the vividness and seeming authenticity of a first-person narrative is still preserved. But in modern stories the minor character makes the best narrator. When the story is told by a minor character he not only preserves the modesty of the hero, but, by recounting his fear at the dangers of the hero and exultation at his successes, he can enlist our emotions, too. At other times the account of the eyewitness is made to seem disinterested and impartial, and becomes for that reason convincing.

Another difficulty with the first-person story is that

where the action is complex, taking place in different localities, the eyewitness has much ado to get from one scene of action to the next. If action occurs simultaneously in two places, he of course can be in only one. He must then resort to the account of another eyewitness, or to letters supposed to have come from the other participants.

History of one's own time may be first-person narrative. Books of travel from Marco Polo to *Trader Horn* have been first-person narratives. Biography is often written by admirers, who, like Boswell, take the part of a very humble character in the story. The writers of "recollections" or "memoirs" sometimes, of course, assume important parts in the narratives supposedly recounting the doings of the great. Note the managerial efficiency of "Tre" in the following incident:

THE CAPTAIN'S WAISTCOAT

. . . On great occasions when our captain wished to be grand, he wore a bright scarlet waistcoat; as he was very corpulent, Byron wished to see if this vest would not button round us both. The captain was taking his siesta one day, when he persuaded the boy to bring up the waistcoat. In the meantime, as it was nearly calm and very hot, I opened the coops of the geese and ducks, who instinctively took to the water. Neptune, the Newfoundland dog, jumped after them, and Moretto, the bulldog, followed him.

"Now," said Byron, standing on the gangway, with one arm in the red waistcoat, "put your arm in, Tre, we will jump overboard, and take the shine out of it."

So we did.

The captain hearing the row on deck, came up, and when he saw the gorgeous garment he was so proud of, defiled by sea water, he roared out, "My lord, you should know better than to make a mutiny on board ship, (the crew were laughing at the fun), I won't heave to, or lower a boat, I hope you will both be drowned."

"Then you will lose your *frite*" (for so the captain always pronounced the word freight), shouted Byron.

As I saw the dogs worrying the ducks and geese, I returned on

board with the waistcoat, pacified the skipper, lowered a boat, and with the aid of a boy, sculled after the birds and beasts. . . .

—TRELAWNEY, *Recollections of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron.*

In the so-called dramatic type of story, the person of the story-teller entirely disappears from the scene. There is now nothing but the style and the interpretation, or view of life, to remind one of the personal medium through which the material of the story had to pass before it could be put into print. We see the characters of the story and read their words to each other much as we see a play upon the stage and hear what the actors say to each other. In a play we know what the characters think only through what they do and say; the author of the play does not step in once in a while to explain something; we figure it out for ourselves. So in the dramatic type of story, there is action and conversation, but the author does not step in with reflections upon this or that, or to explain why a character does this or that. Neither does he presume to know what is going on in the mind of the character, except what may be inferred from outward signs. As on the stage, one gets the entire meaning from the actions and words of the characters. The following excerpt from a famous story illustrates the method.

The Loisels, it will be recalled, have an important social engagement, and Madame, socially ambitious but poor, has no jewels:

"It annoys me to have not a jewel, not a single stone, nothing to put on. I shall look as poverty-stricken as can be. I should almost prefer not to go to the ball."

"You might wear natural flowers," he rejoined. "They are very stylish at this season. You can get two or three magnificent roses for ten francs."

She was not convinced.

"No, there is nothing more humiliating than to look poor among a lot of rich women."

"How stupid you are!" cried her husband. "Go to your friend Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you some jewels. You are intimate enough with her for that."

She uttered a cry of joy.

"That's so. I had never thought of that."

The next day she went to her friend's house, and told her of her trouble.

Madame Forestier went to a wardrobe with a glass door, took out a large jewel box, brought it to Madame Loisel, opened it, and said to her:

"Take your choice, my dear."

She saw first of all bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a Venetian cross in gold and precious stones, a beautiful piece of work. She tried them on before a mirror, hesitated, could not decide to part with them, to replace them. She kept asking:

"You have nothing else?"

"Why, yes. Look. I don't know what may take your fancy."

Suddenly she discovered in a black satin case a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with an immoderate longing. Her hands trembled as she took it up. She fastened it about her throat, over her high dress, and stood in ecstasy before her own image.

Then she asked, hesitatingly, in an agony of suspense:

"Can you lend me this, just this and nothing else?"

"Why, yes, to be sure."

She sprang upon the neck of her friend, kissed her passionately, then fled with her treasure.

—DE MAUPASSANT, *The Necklace.*

There are also certain combinations of these forms. The story with the story-teller's setting is an old and now rather trite form. Several persons meet and some insignificant event reminds one of them of a story, which he either tells himself or urges someone else in the party to tell. The type is too familiar to need illustration here.

The story-within-the-story may be a first-person narrative told either by the principal character, by a minor character, or by an observer, or it may be of the dramatic

sort. There should be a return to the first scene at the end of the story. Plays also use this device. Shakespeare used it in *The Taming of the Shrew* and Shaw in *Fanny's First Play*. Boccaccio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are examples of this type. The stories of the *Decameron* are told by various people to entertain each other while they live in the country to escape the plague; Chaucer's pilgrims tell stories to pass the time during a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury.

There is still another point of view which has advantages that none of the other types possesses. It has been called the omniscient method because the author assumes knowledge of everything *objective* (external) that goes on everywhere at all times, and he also knows the *subjective* (mental) side of his characters. He does not, like the first-person story-teller, have to resort to questionable devices, such as key-hole peeping, eavesdropping, and long letters to obtain a knowledge of what has been happening. Without any apology he assumes to know. Neither does he, like the naturalist, have to confine himself to what can be seen or heard or apprehended by any of the senses. He simply assumes to know the whole inner life of his characters and describes at length the inner workings of their minds.

The following from *The Mill on the Floss* shows clearly the advantages of the method. Maggie has been scolded by Tom for letting his rabbits die while he is away at school. Deeply wounded, she hides herself and her grief in the attic.

Maggie soon thought she had been hours in the attic, and it must be tea time, and they were all having their tea, and thinking of her. Well, then, she would stay up there and starve herself—hide herself behind the tub, and stay there all night: and then they would all be frightened, and Tom would be sorry. Thus Maggie thought in the pride of her heart, as she crept behind the tub; but presently she began to cry again at the idea that they

didn't mind her being there. If she went down again to Tom now, would he forgive her? Perhaps her father would be there, and he would take her part. But, then, she wanted Tom to forgive her because he loved her, not because his father told him. No, she would never go down if Tom didn't come to fetch her. This resolution lasted in great intensity for five dark minutes behind the tub; but then the need of being loved, the strongest need in poor Maggie's nature, began to wrestle with her pride, and soon threw it. She crept from behind her tub into the twilight of the long attic, but just then she heard a quick footstep on the stairs.

This method has such obvious advantages that most writers slip into it. Lately even biographers, by the use of letters, diaries, and shrewd inference based on psychology, have attempted to reveal the mental workings of men long dead. Even those who advocated the objective, dramatic type of fiction, such as Zola and Flaubert, sometimes forgot their "scientific" doctrines and assumed omniscience.

EXERCISES

Classify the following familiar short stories as to the physical point of view of the narrator.

Stevenson, *Sire de Malétroit's Door*
Poe, *The Pit and the Pendulum*
——*Descent into the Maelstrom*
Hawthorne, *Drowne's Wooden Image*
Irving, *Legend of Sleepy Hollow*
——*Rip Van Winkle*
Dickens, *Christmas Carol*
Hale, *The Man Without a Country*

V

The Elements of Narrative: Action

All stories have three indispensable elements: *setting, characters,* and *action.* While all three elements must be present in some degree in every story, any one element may

be made dominant, depending upon the effect which the writer wishes to produce. We shall discuss the three elements in reverse order.

Action there must be in every story. There must, as said earlier in the chapter, be a sequence of events which together seem to make up a complete and unified whole. This action should grow from a small beginning up to a high point of interest, and then subside. When the chief interest is maintained by one of the other elements (character or setting) the action is usually simple; when the action is the chief source of interest it is complex; the story is said to have *plot.*

Plotless Narrative.—Simple narrative is the story of time sequence in which the action flows along steadily from beginning to end without meeting a check or hindrance that can cause complication. Autobiography, biography, history, and stories of travel are usually simple narrative. There may, of course, be plot in the story of the origin of a war, for there is usually an abundance of plotting; the life of a politician may be full of intrigue and counter-intrigue; travel may involve one in numerous complications. But ordinarily these stories are told in time sequence and they interest us because they furnish variety rather than suspense. Very good fiction may also be simple narrative, as we can see by an examination of Bret Harte's *Tennessee's Partner.* The synopsis of the story is this:

Tennessee's Partner (he seemed to have no separate name) married a waitress, and brought her to his (and Tennessee's) cabin at Poker Flat. Soon Tennessee eloped with her to another place, and after a time returned to Poker Flat, alone, the woman having eloped again with a third man. Tennessee's Partner did not shoot Tennessee as was expected; he was the first to shake his hand. Tennessee, a notorious gambler, is later arrested for highway robbery. During the trial Tennessee's Partner brings in a carpetbag full of gold to buy off the erring man; but Tennessee is

hanged. At the hanging Tennessee's Partner appears with his mule Jenny and a cart to take Tennessee home for the last time. He asks the onlookers at the hanging to come to the funeral, and they accept, walking at first jocularly, but later seriously two by two behind the mule cart. Tennessee's Partner has the grave already dug, buries his erring friend, and as the guests leave, they see him sitting on the grave, with his red face buried (so they think) in his red bandana handkerchief. When the fall rains begin, Tennessee's Partner takes to his bed and dies.

There is no plot to this story, though there might easily have been one. The marriage, the elopement of the wife with Tennessee, might, for instance, have been made more of. Suppose the girl whom Tennessee's Partner brought to the cabin had actually been an old sweetheart of Tennessee's, and that their proximity had renewed an old love. Suppose too that Tennessee's Partner had not relinquished her so easily, and that she in turn had clung to Tennessee. Suppose illness or need on her part had been the motive for Tennessee's robbing on the highway; or that the robbery had been committed by Tennessee in a mistaken attempt to recompense his wronged partner. Then we should have had an intricate series of events connected, not by mere time sequence, but by cause and effect. We should then have had a plot (though it is not asserted that we should have had a better story).

Narrative with Plot.—A complex narrative is a story in which there is conflict resulting in a net of events closely related to each other by cause and effect. Narrative in which action is of dominant interest will naturally be complex. Simple narrative we may read for the interest of exciting incidents which succeed each other rapidly; but we are more apt to read simple narrative for the interest in the character or his reactions to the unusual scene through which he passes. In the *Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey,* we get amusing incident, to be sure, such as the canoeists' entertainment by the enthusi-

asts of the French rowing club. But the chief charm in these plotless narratives lies in the descriptive and interpretative element. The narrative element gives life to the relatively static processes of description and exposition. In *Tennessee's Partner* the interest is chiefly in the character. But when the writer sets out to interest us primarily in action, he of course exerts himself to make a story full of complexity, suspense, and surprises.

Complex action—plot—has, since the time of the ancient Greeks, been thought of as having two parts. The greater part of the story consists in getting the characters as deeply entangled as possible; the second part extricates them. The first part is the tying of the knot; the second part is the untying. During the first part the story grows continually more absorbing, the interest mounts higher and higher, and hence we speak of this part as the rising action. When the highest point of interest has been reached we call it the climax. From that point the difficulties begin to disappear, the intensity declines, until we reach a complete solution, an uncovering of the mystery, a *dénouement*. The curve of interest may be variously represented, depending upon the type of story. If the solution is as difficult or requires as much space as the tying of the knot, the story might be represented thus:

If the solution comes suddenly, as is usual in the surprise ending made popular by O. Henry, our curve of interest would be like this:

In a narrative of some length, as in some plays, there may be minor points, thus:

VI

Action: Motivation and Foreshadowing

In all sorts of narrative the characters must have what seems to be sufficient reason for doing what they do; every act on the part of every character must, as we say, be adequately *motivated.* The action must seem to spring naturally out of the characters. While people whom we know do surprising and apparently inconsistent things, our surprise may be due to our lack of understanding of the people concerned. There are causes adequate to explain everything, if we only knew them. When writing biography, we must try to learn our people so fully that every act of theirs will seem in keeping with the total personality. In fiction we must be especially careful to make the actions of our characters seem in harmony with the fundamental conception which we have given. Unless the reader finds the sequence of action plausible, the story is ruined for him. He is unable to enter into the story; unable to understand why our hero did or failed to do certain things.

Let us examine a story—*Tennessee's Partner,* already cited. After Tennessee had eloped with the wife of Tennessee's Partner, and had been abandoned by her in turn,

why is Tennessee welcomed back by his Partner? Is this strange act properly motivated? Yes, it is. Bret Harte has made it clear that this is a story of the devotion of a man to his friend. Of course, the Partner is a quiet and gentle character, even self-effacing. He has not even a name of his own. He is a mere shadow of the brilliant but unreliable Tennessee. It is likely, then, that he could see no wrong in his friend, or if he did he would forgive it. Perhaps, from the attempt to buy Tennessee out of the hands of the law, we may infer that the Partner had no very keen sense of right and wrong. The motive force of his life was admiration for Tennessee. From the fact that the woman was hardly the sort to inspire a lasting sentiment we may also infer that Tennessee's Partner was not long resentful at losing her. All things considered, the action is made to seem plausible and natural. Bret Harte makes us feel that we understand these crude people, makes us sympathize with them in their troubles.

The sequence of action in a good story should be an unbroken chain, every act sufficiently explained by what has gone before. There should be no place to which we can point and say: This is absurd, and the story from here on is ruined because of this improbable link. Accidental meetings, providential rainstorms, or storms at sea which serve to separate or unite the characters must be used with caution.

In life we know that many actions are not at all rational. We say a person acts upon impulse. The character, too, may act upon impulse, and a simple, impulsive action may bring a train of serious consequences,—provided the impulse seems natural to the character. The picking up of the fatal piece of string in de Maupassant's story was the result of impulse, and the secretiveness, which resulted in the accusation of theft, was also impulsive. But we all have just enough acquisitiveness to un-

derstand why the poor old man picked up the string, and we are all just enough ashamed of such petty acquisitiveness to understand why he wished to conceal an innocent though undignified thing. We can also understand how suspicion was fastened upon him; the circumstantial evidence being so very good, the victim's protestations of innocence were unavailing.

Events cast their shadows before them, says the adage. This is doubly true in fiction. Events must be carefully prepared for, especially if rather improbable. We often understand from the beginning of a story that the outcome is to be tragic. In *The Return of the Native,* the description of Egdon Heath sets the key for the whole gloomy story. The action in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* has a tragic implication from the start. That partly accounts for the absurdity of the cinema version, which, true to movie tradition, but false to the story which it tried to reproduce, without warning tacked on a happy ending. The author may, of course, present the major part of his story in such a way that either a happy or sad ending would, in retrospect, seem to have grown naturally out of the events.

The pathetic, and ironic, ending of Hawthorne's *The Ambitious Guest* is carefully prepared for. The dangerous situation of the cottage is described; there is a recurring note of melancholy. "They dwelt in a cold spot and a dangerous one; for a mountain towered above their heads, so steep that stones would often rumble down its sides and startle them at midnight." And a little later:

> The frank-hearted stranger had just drawn his chair to the fire wher something like a heavy footstep was heard without, rushing down the steep side of the mountain as with long and rapid strides, and taking such a leap in passing the cottage as to strike the opposite precipice. The family held their breath, because they knew the sound, and their guest held his by instinct.

"The mountain has thrown a stone at us for fear we should forget him," said the landlord, recovering himself. "He sometimes nods his head and threatens to come down; but we are old neighbors, and agree pretty well upon the whole. Besides we have a sure place of refuge hard by if he should be coming in good earnest."

The stranger tells of his urge to achieve a name in the world, and so fires the ambition of the landlord; the child wishes to go out to the brook; a wagon passes; the grandmother wants to be assured that she shall be placed rightly in her coffin. And they are so engrossed in these lugubrious topics that the avalanche is well on its way before they hear its roar, and rush to "the safe place hard by."

Only a writer of the highest ability can convincingly end a story with avalanche, lightning, flood, or other "act of providence." Before a reader will accept a conclusion or solution brought about by such chance happenings, he must become so engrossed in the story that he no longer remembers it is not real. A story which concludes with the death of all concerned, or with the death of the principal characters, however the holocaust comes about, has become increasingly difficult to manage. In spite of the permanent success of *Hamlet,* in which we have a "solution by massacre," and in spite of the achievements of Hawthorne, Hardy, and others, the death of many characters, or death caused by natural agents, is likely to seem artificial in stories. We want action to be logical, motivated: we are not impressed by *deus ex machina.*

In *The Mill on the Floss,* it will be recalled, Maggie and Tom meet their death in the flood. The probability of flood is impressed upon the reader at several points in the story, so that when it comes, it does not seem as if George Eliot had called upon the gods to help her end the story; and yet it is not wholly convincing. That the house roll-

ing down the flood should be able to overtake and capsize the boat with Maggie and Tom in it, makes one shrug a little.

When the action is complex and the future sequence of events depends upon the chance meeting of two or more characters who have been more or less widely separated, this meeting needs careful planning. The actions of the separate parties must be exactly timed, so that it will not only seem probable, but inevitable that they should meet. There may be a looking-forward to this meeting, or it may come as a surprise. But in the latter case, the presence of the party which caused the surprise must in retrospect seem natural and sufficiently motivated.

Meetings such as those just mentioned bring out what every reader of history and fiction alike has noticed: that stories are often made of several "strands," all woven together. The simple narrative alone has a single strand. Complex narrative may have several, all more or less highly developed. Where one character dominates the story, the part concerning him will be the main strand. An analysis of *Silas Marner* will illustrate what is meant. The main strand is, of course, the story of the old weaver. The other strands tell the story of Godfrey, the story of Molly Farren, the story of Dunstan, of the old Squire. Where the strands cross we have notable scenes, such as the finding of Molly dead in the snow, and the golden-haired Eppie, Godfrey's daughter, on Marner's doorstep, on the very night when Dunstan had robbed the weaver of his gold. The discovery of Dunstan's bones in the lime pit brings the solution. Confessions are made, and Marner's gold is restored. But the meetings which made these dramatic scenes possible and probable were the result of the very careful spinning of each strand of the story. The writing of complex narrative requires much the same sort of skill (to change the figure) as playing

a game of chess. The movement of each "man" affects the position of all of the others. Or the narrative structure might be compared with the mechanism of a clock: every wheel is interlocked with all the other wheels; a wheel has no independent movement; when it moves, all the others must make relative changes of position. But since the writer cannot show the whole complex movement at once, he shows part at a time.

EXERCISE

Read one of the following novels and report on the motivation and foreshadowing:

Eliot, *Silas Marner*
——*The Mill on the Floss*
Hardy, *The Return of the Native*
Wharton, *Ethan Frome*

VII

The Elements of Narrative: Character

Biography is concerned largely with character. Whether the writer of a diary or of an autobiography consciously anatomizes his own personality, he does, in recounting his actions and reactions, reveal his character. Nothing could surpass the *Diary* of Samuel Pepys as a revelation of character. History, too, may be written around the personalities of the dominant men of the various periods, for, as Carlyle said, "Universal History, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here."

Fiction is often chiefly concerned with exhibiting character. The action is employed to reveal the personality of the actor, instead of being an end in itself. This was

Bret Harte's purpose in the story which we reviewed above. The personality of Tennessee's Partner is what especially interested Bret Harte, and his aim was to exhibit to us the primitive simplicity and fidelity of that character. He does not realize the full possibilities of the action,—partly because he does not want the reader to get too engrossed in the events, partly because he has no intention of making an extended narrative. He wants to create a single and powerful impression of a friendship which has beauty and power, in spite of the sordidness in the midst of which it grew.

Whether the fiction writer works objectively, that is, as the realist (or the biographer and historian) by observing people in action, or whether he constructs his stories imaginatively, he must see his characters as unique, as individuals. They must, of course, think and act enough like the average to seem real, but they must also be different. For if the character has not something universal, even commonplace, about him, he will not be understood; and yet if he does not depart quite markedly from the usual, he will be uninteresting. The reader must feel both familiarity and novelty. He must feel at home in the character, be able to project himself into the character. A large part of our pleasure comes from this vicarious participation in the action. The reader must be able to say, "I should have done just so if I had been in these circumstances"; at least he must be able to say, "I can see how such a person would do so." Yet, if the character reacts always in a thoroughly obvious and conventional manner, the reader will throw the story aside. He will feel that he has been over all that before, that he is seeing not a person at all, but a mere type.

Characters Must Be Understood.—Characters must be intellectually comprehended by the writer. Otherwise there can be no consistency in their presentation. It is true that since we never thoroughly understand any

actual person to the extent that we can predict his every act,—we do not understand even ourselves sufficiently well to predict what a certain decision is going to be which we have to make before eight o'clock tomorrow—it may be too much to expect that we thoroughly understand the person whose biography we are undertaking to write, or the fictional character we are creating. Nevertheless, in art we expect to get a better grasp of things than we get in life: the artist can force the recalcitrant materials of art into form; he simplifies, throwing out that which cannot be beaten into shape. It is because of his success in thus molding material to his purpose, because of the relative perfection which he achieves, because of the absence of incongruous, inharmonious, and unintelligible elements in finished work that we consider art superior to nature. Nature remains only partly intelligible, but art we mold to fit our wishes and dreams. Hence we look for unified conceptions in art. And unified conceptions are largely the result of thorough intellectual grasp of one's subject.

Emotional realization of a character is no less necessary than intellectual comprehension. Writers of imagination live with their characters, enter into their hopes and joys and fears, plan with them, suffer with them. When Thackeray had written the last line of his *The Newcomes,* he gave over his work with reluctance, confessing himself as "quite sorry to part with a number of kind people with whom I had been living and talking these twenty months past." [1] That is how he conceived his characters—they were so real that he lived and talked with them, and when the book ended he said it was as if he had drawn a boundary line beyond which these good people were forbidden to go. Dickens, we know, lived in this way with his characters. Every one is familiar with the story of how, when he got to the death of lit-

[1] Hester Thackeray Ritchie, *Thackeray and His Daughter,* p. 73.

tle Nell, in *The Old Curiosity Shop,* he went out into the street crying, "I have killed her, I have killed little Nell." And one can well imagine that Galsworthy, though in a calmer way perhaps, feels this intimate touch with his characters. No one can read the scenes of the death and funeral of old Soames Forsyte in the novel *Swan Song,* without a conviction that the author was parting with a dear friend whose virtues he loved, and whose faults he condoned. Such an emotional attitude cannot, of course, be manufactured at will; it is the result of a warm imaginative creation of characters, in which the writer visualizes them as they would be in life; thinks with them, talks with them, feels with them, aids them, opposes them, as if they were real people.

Analysis and Description.—A detailed analysis of the mental make-up of a person is not likely to be the best way to present his character. Sometimes a character has a pronounced and dominant trait, such as the hypocrisy of Tartuffe, or the 'umbleness of Uriah Heep, or the hard worldliness of Becky Sharp, or the puerile and frustrated idealism of George F. Babbitt. Such mental bent should be capitalized, but as a rule the skilled writer does not halt his story to present the character all at once. He is more inclined to drop hints here and there, giving significant details in speech and action which will suggest to the reader more than pages of careful analysis would accomplish. Thus, Chekhov says of a man, "He did not eat; he partook of food," and in that one brief satiric comment reveals everything one needs to know about this character. De Maupassant is similarly effective when he relates of one of his characters that in "moments of rhetorical expansion" he would exclaim, "My whole life gives me the right to shake hands with myself." And Walpole achieves a like feat in presenting the Archdeacon in *The Cathedral:*

He greeted God, greeted Him as an equal, and thanked Him as a fellow-companion who had helped him through a difficult and dusty journey. For all these things he thanked God, and he greeted him with an outstretched hand.

"As one power to another," his soul cried, "greetings! You have been a true and loyal friend to me. Anything that I can do for you I will."

Yet there are times when the writer takes time for a definite analysis of his characters. And when this is done skillfully, the story loses nothing in interest. Notice with what deft, sure strokes de Maupassant presents Mme. Loisel—and her husband too—at the opening of *The Necklace:*

She was one of those pretty and charming girls, born by a blunder of destiny in a family of employees. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of being known, understood, loved, married by a man rich and distinguished; and she let them make a match for her with a little clerk in the Department of Education.

She was simple since she could not be adorned; but she was unhappy as though kept out of her own class; for women have no caste and no descent, their beauty, their grace, and their charm serving them instead of birth and fortune. Their native keenness, their instinctive elegance, their flexibility of mind, are their only hierachy; and these make the daughters of the people the equals of the most lofty dames.

She suffered intensely, feeling herself born for every delicacy and every luxury. She suffered from the poverty of her dwelling, from the worn walls, the abraded chairs, the ugliness of the stuffs. All these things, which another woman of her caste would not even have noticed, tortured her and made her indignant. The sight of the little girl from Brittany who did her humble housework awoke in her desolated regrets and distracted dreams. She let her mind dwell on the quiet vestibules, hung with Oriental tapestries, lighted by tall lamps of bronze, and on the two tall footmen in knee breeches who dozed in the large armchairs, made drowsy by the heat of the furnace. She let her mind dwell on the large parlors, decked with old silk, with their delicate furniture,

supporting precious bric-à-brac, and on the coquettish little rooms, perfumed, prepared for the five o'clock chat with the most intimate friends, men well known and sought after, whose attentions all women envied and desired.

When she sat down to dine, before a tablecloth three days old, in front of her husband, who lifted the cover of the tureen, declaring with an air of satisfaction, "Ah, the good *pot-au-feu*. I don't know any better than that," she was thinking of delicate repasts, with glittering silver, with tapestries peopling the walls with ancient figures and with strange birds in a fairy-like forest; she was thinking of exquisite dishes, served in marvelous platters, of compliment whispered and heard with a sphinx-like smile, while she was eating the rosy flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no dresses, no jewelry, nothing. And she loved nothing else; she felt herself made for that only. She would so much have liked to please, to be envied, to be seductive and sought after.

She had a rich friend, a comrade of her convent days, whom she did not want to go and see any more, so much did she suffer as she came away. And she wept all day long, from chagrin, from regret, from despair, and from distress.

This is excellent. In one page of almost pure analysis, with only a thread of narrative, and a descriptive touch added here and there, the author makes us understand this woman completely.

The place of description in the interpretation of character has been touched upon in a previous chapter, and need be considered here only in its relation to other methods of characterization. In general, it may be said that in stories, as in life, to know the details of personal appearance—features, dress, and so forth—is less important than to know how people act and how they talk. But we may learn a good deal by observing dress and appearance of people we see about us; facial expression and general bearing are especially significant of what goes on in the mind. Even clothes may tell us much about a Goldsmith, a Beau Brummel, or a Disraeli—though ordinarily a description of clothing, in itself, however well it may

distinguish a college professor from a sophomore, or a hobo from a traveling salesman, helps little in getting at the unique in each. More important than clothes are certain significant physical traits which characters sometimes possess, such as the wooden leg of John Silver, the powerful physique of Captain McWhirr, the primitive, massive strength of Harlov in *A Lear of the Steppes,* the blackness of Othello, the clubfoot of Byron. These are things the reader needs to know, especially when, as in *A Lear of the Steppes,* important events in the story depend upon the physical qualities of the character in question.

Physical description and unfolding of character are often inseparably interwoven, as in the following presentation of Mr. Duffy in James Joyce's *A Painful Case:*

> Mr. Duffy abhorred anything which betokened physical or mental disorder. A mediæval doctor would have called him saturnine. His face, which carried the entire tale of his years, was of the brown tint of Dublin streets. On his long and rather large head grew dry black hair, and a tawny moustache did not quite cover an unamiable mouth. His cheekbones also gave his face a harsh character; but there was no harshness in the eyes which, looking at the world from under their tawny eyebrows, gave the impression of a man ever alert to greet a redeeming instinct in others but often disappointed. He lived at a little distance from his body, regarding his own acts with doubtful side-glances. He had an odd autobiographical habit which led him to compose in his mind from time to time a short sentence about himself containing a subject in the third person and a predicate in the past tense. He never gave alms to beggars and walked firmly, carrying a stout hazel.

Dialogue and Action.—Useful as analysis and description may be in revealing character, by far the most effective means of characterization are speech and action. We learn most about people by what they do and say. Dramatists, since it has become the common practice to publish plays for reading, put in brief descriptions of the

physical proportions and clothing of the characters; but the comparatively greater importance of dialogue over such details is proved by the fact that the best-known characters in drama have been represented by actors who do not resemble each other at all; furthermore, Hamlet may wear long hose and a black velvet tunic, or a smart dinner coat, the latest from London. The character is in the lines which he speaks and in the action, not the coat.

Very brief dialogue in narrative, with its accompanying explanatory and descriptive remarks, will often set characters before us with a distinctness hardly attainable in any other way. Mr. Wells in *Tono Bungay,* when he introduces the Honourable Beatrice Normandy, tells us she was eight, and devotes a hundred and fifty words to a description of her childish face. It is good description and brief, but we learn much more about the character of Beatrice and about George in the conversation which took place in the housekeeper's room at tea:

"Nannie," she said, pointing, and Nannie [her nurse] left a question of my mother's disregarded to attend to her; "is he a servant boy?"

"S-s-sh," said Nannie. "He's Master Ponderevo."

"Is he a servant boy?" repeated Beatrice.

"He's a schoolboy," said my mother.

"Then may I talk to him, Nannie?"

Nannie surveyed me with brutal inhumanity. "You mustn't talk too much," she said to her charge; and cut cake into fingers for her. "No," she added decisively, as Beatrice made to speak.

Beatrice became malignant. Her eyes explored me with unjustifiable hostility. "He's got dirty hands," she said, stabbing at the forbidden fruit. "And there's a fray to his collar."

Then she gave herself up to the cake with an appearance of entire forgetfulness of me that filled me with hate and a passionate desire to compel her to admire me. . . . And the next day before tea, I did for the first time in my life, freely, without command or any compulsion, wash my hands.

The persons in a story must speak "in character." That is merely another way of saying what we have already said: that the persons of the story best reveal their moral traits by what they say. Lines, no matter how amusing or wise, unless they come from one in whose mouth they would be fitting and natural, are bad lines. Again, it is not sufficient to make the words of a child of five suitable to a child of that age, or the words of an old nurse suitable to one of that kind and time of life. The words, while natural (*i.e.,* typical) enough for the child or the old woman must help to distinguish little Jon Forsyte from all other small boys, and Peggotty from all other old women. If a speech can be taken from one character and assigned to another, it means there is no real characterization.

Dialogue, moreover, must do more than exhibit the true personality of the speaker. It must advance the story, advance the action. The conversational "scenes" must never be of a static sort. They must either explain the antecedents of the story, reveal the present status, or carry on the new development. Dramatists usually do this more skillfully than novelists or short-story writers, because they have to, especially now that the soliloquy is no longer favored. A reading of the first act of *John Gabriel Borkman* will show how skillfully the story can be made to advance while the events of many years, which are now coming to their climax, are made clear. Among contemporary works, perhaps John Erskine's *Galahad* reveals as clearly as any the two uses of conversation which we have been discussing. Guinevere, Lancelot, Arthur, and Galahad show themselves very clearly as Erskine conceived them, not the simple souls represented in the Arthurian legends, but complex characters who think, act, and talk in a manner which accords with what science has taught us about psychology, environment, and heredity. Also the

story progresses almost entirely by means of conversation; in fact, the book is almost entirely conversation.

Lancelot, after his period of insanity, had spent several years at the castle of Elaine, devoting most of his time to the training of their young son, Galahad. Elaine, meantime, is sure that some day Queen Guinevere will summon Lancelot and that he will go. Finally Sir Bors arrives from the Court. Elaine, although she intuitively knows his errand, goes at Lancelot's request to greet him:

"You are welcome here, Sir Bors," she said.

"Am I? I was afraid you wouldn't feel so about it. Lancelot has told you, I suppose?"

"He didn't need to—when you came in I knew it was to take him away."

"Not quite that," said Bors, "but he's badly needed at Court, and I've come at the queen's request to ask for his aid."

"Why doesn't Arthur ask for it?"

"I dare say he does, indirectly—but it was Guinevere who sent me."

"I can understand that, of course."

"Elaine," said Lancelot, "I told you the queen wouldn't send for me, or if she did I wouldn't go. That's what you are thinking of now, I suppose. I was essentially right. If this weren't an exceptional situation, she never would have sent for me."

"And you never would have gone," said Elaine. "I understand."

"The queen is in danger of her life. She has been accused of treason by Meliagrance, who insists on trying out the charge in mortal combat, and the queen asks me to defend her."

"Who is Meliagrance, father?" asked Galahad.

"A powerful fighter—one of the Court," said Lancelot. "There's no one there who could surely win against him."

"Couldn't Arthur?"

"Yes, but of course Arthur can't very well defend his own wife."

"That's one of those dead ideas," said Elaine. "There you are, Galahad. Who else should defend a wife, if not her husband."

"Perhaps," said Lancelot, "but Arthur is out of the question, and if I don't go, Meliagrance will have proved his case."

"In plain words, then," said Elaine, "Meliagrance accuses the queen of treason, and she, following the most sensitive rules of high-minded conduct, sends for you to kill him!"

Bors looked on with interest. Lancelot had nothing to say.

"When you have killed him, Lancelot, what will you have proved on your side?"

"Nothing, Elaine—no more than if a man tried to hurt you, and I killed him first. Meliagrance wants the queen's life. He wanted her love, but she wouldn't have him. This is his revenge."

"Oh, he loved her, did he? Poor man! He's as good as dead. . . . Do you go at once?"

Dialogue is a means to compression. It is wonderful what vivid, complete effects can sometimes be secured in a few words of dialogue. In de Maupassant's *The Necklace,* after Madame Loisel has lost her borrowed diamonds and a night and day have been spent in fruitless search, the substance of a whole evening's anxious debate is condensed into one speech. It is necessary to give two or three sentences that precede and follow:

She waited all day, in the same dazed state in face of this horrible disaster.

Loisel came back in the evening, with his face worn and white; he had discovered nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "that you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it repaired. That will give us time to turn around."

She wrote as he dictated.

Prosper Mérimée is one of the great story-tellers of the world. He is notable for his dramatic effects and for his ability to compress much into little; he wastes no words, and yet leaves nothing necessary unsaid. Note in the following extract from his remarkable story *Mateo Falcone* how he employs dialogue to reveal character and to advance the action. The scene is near the cabin of the somewhat primitive Mateo, not far from the half-wild

Corsican *mâquis*. Fortunato, the ten-year-old son, is looking after the home in the absence of his father and mother, when a wounded bandit pursued by soldiers who have shot him in the thigh, but whom he has so far eluded, approaches him and asks for aid:

He came up to Fortunato and said:—

"Are you the son of Mateo Falcone?"

"Yes."

"I am Gianetto Sanpiero. I am pursued by the yellow-collars. Hide me, for I cannot go any further."

"But what will my father say if I hide you without his permission?"

"He will say that you did right."

"How do you know?"

"Hide me quickly; they are coming."

"Wait till my father returns."

"Good Lord! how can I wait?—They will be here in five minutes. Come, hide me, or I will kill you."

Fortunato answered with the utmost coolness:—

"Your gun is unloaded, and there are no more cartridges in your *carchera*." [1]

"I have my stiletto."

"But could you run as fast as I can?"

With a bound he put himself out of reach.

"You are no son of Mateo Falcone! Will you let me be taken in front of his house?"

The child seemed moved.

"What will you give me if I hide you?" he said, drawing nearer.

The bandit felt in the leather pocket that hung from his side and took out a five-franc piece, which he had put aside, no doubt, for powder. Fortunato smiled at the sight of the piece of silver, and, seizing hold of it, he said to Gianetto:—

"Don't be afraid."

He quickly made a large hole in a haystack which stood close by the house, Gianetto crouched down in it, and the child covered him up so as to leave a little breathing space, and yet in such a

[1] A leather belt which served the joint purposes of cartridge box and pocket for dispatches and orders.

way as to make it impossible for any one to suspect that the hay concealed a man. He acted, further, with the ingenious cunning of the savage. He fetched a cat and her kittens and put them on top of the haystack to make believe that it had not been touched for a long time. Then he carefully covered over with dust the blood stains which he had noticed on the path near the house, and, this done, he lay down again in the sun with the utmost sang-froid.

Some minutes later six men with brown uniforms with yellow collars, commanded by an adjutant, stood before Mateo's door. This adjutant was a distant relative of the Falcones. (It is said that further degrees of relationship are recognized in Corsica than anywhere else.) His name was Tidora Gamba; he was an energetic man, greatly feared by the banditti, and had already hunted out many of them.

"Good day, youngster," he said, coming up to Fortunato. "How you have grown! Did you see a man pass just now?"

"Oh, I am not yet so tall as you, cousin," the child replied, with a foolish look.

"You soon will be. But tell me, have you not seen a man pass by?"

"Have I seen a man pass by?"

"Yes, a man with a pointed black velvet cap and a waistcoat embroidered in red and yellow."

"A man with a pointed cap and a waistcoat embroidered in scarlet and yellow?"

"Yes; answer sharply, and don't repeat my questions."

"The priest passed our door this morning on his horse Piero. He asked me how papa was, and I replied ——"

"You are making game of me, you rascal. Tell me at once, which way Gianetto went, for it is he we are after; I am certain he took this path."

"How do you know that?"

"How do I know that? I know you have seen him."

"How can one see passers-by when one is asleep?"

"You were not asleep, you little demon; the gunshots would wake you."

"You think, then, cousin, that your guns make noise enough? My father's rifle makes much more noise."

"May the devil take you, you young scamp. I am absolutely

certain you have seen Gianetto. Perhaps you have hidden him. Here, you fellows, go into the house, and see if our man is not there. He could only walk on one foot, and he has too much common sense, the villain, to have tried to reach the *mâquis* limping. Besides, the traces of blood stop here."

"Whatever will papa say?" Fortunato asked, with a chuckle. "What will he say when he finds out that his house has been searched during his absence?"

"Do you know that I can make you change your tune, you scamp?" cried the adjutant Gamba, seizing him by the ear. "Perhaps you will speak when you have had a thrashing with the flat of a sword."

Fortunato kept on laughing derisively.

"My father is Mateo Falcone," he said significantly.

"Do you know, you young scamp, that I can take you away to Corte or to Bastia? I shall put you in a dungeon, on a bed of straw, with your feet in irons, and I shall guillotine you if you do not tell me where Gianetto Sanpiero is."

The child burst out laughing at this ridiculous menace.

"My father is Mateo Falcone," he repeated.

"Adjutant, do not let us embroil ourselves with Mateo," one of the soldiers whispered.

Gamba was evidently embarrassed. He talked in a low voice with his soldiers, who had already been all over the house. It was not a lengthy operation, for a Corsican hut only consists of a single square room. The furniture comprises a table, benches, boxes, and utensils for cooking and hunting. All this time little Fortunato caressed his cat, and seemed, maliciously, to enjoy the confusion of his cousin and the soldiers.

One soldier came up to the haycock. He looked at the cat and carelessly stirred the hay with his bayonet, shrugging his shoulders as though he thought the precaution ridiculous. Nothing moved, and the face of the child did not betray the least agitation.

The adjutant and his band were in despair; they looked solemnly out over the plain, half inclined to turn the way they had come; but their chief, convinced that threats would produce no effect upon the son of Falcone, thought he would make one last effort by trying the effect of favors and presents.

"My boy," he said, "you are a wide-awake young dog, I can see. You will get on. But you play a dangerous game with me; and, if I did not want to give pain to my cousin Mateo, devil take it! I would carry you off with me."

"Bah!"

"But, when my cousin returns I shall tell him all about it, and he will give you the whip till he draws blood for having told me lies."

"How do you know that?"

"You will see. But, look here, be a good lad, and I will give you something."

"You had better go and look for Gianetto in the *mâquis,* cousin, for if you stay any longer it will take a cleverer fellow than you to catch him."

The adjutant drew a watch out of his pocket, a silver watch worth quite ten crowns. He watched how little Fortunato's eyes sparkled as he looked at it, and he held out the watch at the end of its steel chain.

"You rogue," he said, "you would like to have such a watch as this hung round your neck, and to go and walk up and down the streets of Porto-Vecchio as proud as a peacock; people would ask you the time, and you would reply, look at my watch!"

"When I am grown up, my uncle the corporal will give me a watch."

"Yes; but your uncle's son has one already—not such a fine one as this, however—for he is younger than you."

The boy sighed.

"Well, would you like this watch, kiddy?"

Fortunato ogled the watch out of the corner of his eyes, just as a cat does when a whole chicken is given to it. It dares not pounce upon the prey, because it is afraid a joke is being played on it, but it turns its eyes away now and then, to avoid succumbing to the temptation, licking its lips all the time as though to say to its master, "What a cruel joke you are playing on me!"

The adjutant Gamba, however, seemed really willing to give the watch. Fortunato did not hold out his hand; but he said to him with a bitter smile:—

"Why do you make fun of me?"

"I swear I am not joking. Only tell me where Gianetto is, and this watch is yours."

Actions are even more significant than dialogue. In life what a person does often speaks so loud that we cannot hear what he says; and in narrative, though we expect a man's acts to be consistent with his speech, we are usually more ready to accept actions at their face value than words. One action will often serve to put a character before us unmistakably and unforgettably. For instance, one knows this character of Chekhov's at once. "He picked his teeth and put the toothpick back in the glass." One knows also a great deal about the poor little postilion in *Joseph Andrews,* who, when no one of the comfortably clothed passengers in the coach will lend a cloak to cover the naked Joseph—left in the ditch beaten and stripped by cut-throats—pulls off his own thin coat, and goes shivering on his way.

The acts of persons in a story should grow out of their characters, but in turn character is revealed by acts. Consistency between what a character is shown to be and what he does, is all-important; motivation and preparation are as essential in presenting character as in plot development. When a character is to perform some unusual or startling act—something very courageous or very cowardly, very magnanimous or very ungenerous, something requiring great strength or showing extreme weakness—this act should be prepared for in advance by presenting a person who would or could do such a thing. Minor actions—straws which show which way the wind blows—are often the best means to produce effects of probability. The following extract from a student's narrative shows how a talented young writer has met this problem. The test in this case is to make convincing the impulsive and erratic act through which Lars Peter meets his death. Notice how admirably the earlier minor incidents prepare our minds for what follows:

Lars Peter and Sorn grew to be two healthy, wide-awake boys. Lars Peter, the older, was short, muscular, and quick like his father. A tendency to be stubborn had begun to show in him at an early age. One day when he refused to eat what was set before him, his father said he could take his choice between eating what was on the table and eating field corn alone in a corner. Lars Peter chose the corn and sat in the corner nibbling stubbornly at its hard kernels while the meal progressed at the table.

His quickness, which developed into a restless impulsiveness, often got him into trouble. From the time he was small, he had to be told not to touch things. When his mother brought anything home from town he was always the first one to see it. On one occasion, he climbed upon the table to examine some new tumblers which his mother had sent away for. He felt himself slipping, and grabbing hold of the table, upset it with the entire lot. His mother came running into the room calling, "Hvad har du da gjord?" (What have you done?) He stood glumly looking at the disaster refusing to speak.

On Sunday when his parents were sitting home in the house, the two boys went out into the pasture to look at the new colt which their father had bought at auction. Sorn kept reminding Lars Peter that they were not to go near it, because their mother had said that it was wild and might kick. This seemed to act as a dare to Lars Peter. He ran out after the colt while Sorn hugged the fence. Suddenly, Lars Peter shouted, "Now watch him jump." He picked up a three-cornered piece of wood, and creeping stealthily upon the colt, aimed it so that one of its sharp corners struck the colt's flank, piercing its flesh. The colt reared in the air, turned suddenly, threw out its hoofs, and Lars Peter fell stunned to the ground, the blood streaming from his face. Sorn began to scream loudly, but Lars Peter rose half blinded from the ground and angrily ordered him to keep still. The boys went to the water tank, and after the blood stains had been removed Lars Peter made Sorn promise not to tell. When Sorn asked him what he would do about the wound which showed plainly above the eye, he answered, "I will say I cut it by running into the barbed wire fence."

Sorn daily grew taller, and soon he outgrew his brother. He was slow-moving like his mother, and very systematic and accurate

in all that he undertook to do. In school he could out-add or out-spell any one in his class; but his father often said that he would never be much good on the farm, because he was too slow.

The boys went to the country school, and despite their mother's warning not to play with the Norskers, because they would some day cause them to come to some bad end, they became their friends and stealthily coasted and skated with them at noon hour and after school. Occasionally, much to Katreena's dislike, the Norsker boys even ventured into the Olsen Yard to see their pits and make plans with the boys.

Then one day a great tragedy occurred. The neighborhood boys were hunting rabbits one cold winter night after school. The Olsen boys did not carry guns, but Lars Peter, who saw a rabbit coming, grabbed for one of the other boys' guns to shoot at the rabbit. The gun, which was loaded, went off and shot Lars Peter in the breast. When Katreena and Mads reached the spot, he lay dead upon the frozen snow.

—HANSEN, *Katreena.*

Type Characters.—It is customary in modern writing to avoid type characters. Many fine narratives and dramas, dating back to the Greeks and ending in our own day, have, it is true, been built about type rather than strongly individualized characters. Moreover, there have been many great works in which the characters were made typical to the point of becoming abstractions—personifications of moral virtues, like Hopefulness, Avarice, Chastity, Holiness, such as we find in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress.* Nevertheless, we do not care much for these things in current writing; we do not even greatly like such types as the small-town physician or the "go-getter" Rotarian. Just as personified abstractions no longer please us, though set forth with the narrative skill and poetic power of Spenser and Bunyan, so these latter types have lost interest for us, even for satire. We feel that the typical makes the expository or, in cases, the persuasive element so prominent that it injures the narra-

tive. Characters who cannot be so easily seen through, who have about them a little of the mystery of the interesting individual in life, are those which intrigue us most. Witness Hamlet. He is the most interesting, has been the most talked-of, written-about character in English, perhaps in any, literature, and he remains out of reach of complete comprehension. That is why he is still a vital character.

Character Development.—While characters should be made to appear consistent in speech and action, a narrative of some length will reveal the changes which events produce upon the persons of the story. In actual life we are accustomed to such development of personality. In our own lives we are aware of changes brought about by the circumstances in which we have lived. We are accustomed by our reading of history and biography to observe the growth or disintegration of character which events have produced in the great. Our reading of biology and psychology has given us some insight into hereditary traits and into the effects which our surroundings produce upon us. Modern biographers utilize such knowledge and have as a result given us many careful studies in character development. Writers of fiction are hardly less careful in tracing such character development. Even the short narrative, because it concerns itself with the crises and turning points in life, has room to show character development.

EXERCISES

1. Write a paper on your favorite character in fiction, telling why this character impresses and interests you.

2. What characters do you recall in fiction as being types? What ones stand out as being distinctly individualistic? Which do you find the more interesting?

3. In the next stories you read study methods of character development. If characters change, are the changes probable?

VIII

The Elements of Narrative: Setting

The "setting" of a narrative is the scene in which the action takes place. In drama the word is usually shortened to "set," and the directions for arranging the stage are indicated briefly at the beginning of the play, or at the beginning of each division of the action:

> A dimly lighted room in an old country-house. A door on the right, a door on the left, and a small concealed door in a corner. At the back, stained-glass windows, in which the color green predominates, and a glass door opening onto a terrace. A Dutch clock in one corner. A lamp lighted.

Such is the setting for Maeterlinck's one-act play, *The Intruder*.

In all story-telling, enough detail must be presented so that the reader can visualize the scene through which the characters move. When we read biography we want to know as much as possible about the environment of the chief character. An account of the life of Emerson or Hawthorne would be very unsatisfactory unless we were enabled to visualize the New England scene through which he passed. To present the scene the narrator must, of course, employ description.

The setting of narrative may be considered under two heads: the physical, and the mental or psychological. The physical setting consists of the topography of the country through which the characters move—the lay of the land. Where the physical scene involves an extensive geographic area, the author must take the greatest care to make the other physical features as clear as possible. Swift made maps of the strange lands through which Lemuel Gulliver moved, and Hardy supplied a map to show the environs of Casterbridge. Lately, mystery "thrillers" have taken

to furnishing charts which show the location of doors, windows, and furniture of the room in which the "mysterious murder" took place. The use of these visual aids does not lessen the obligation of the writer to produce clear and vivid description of the scene; they are mentioned here to show that writers are aware of the great necessity for making the setting intelligible to the reader —they know that setting should be regarded as a structural element in narrative, not as a decoration.

In history and biography the scene in which a certain person lived, especially in youth, must be carefully studied. Often it will account for many traits of character. That a man can be known by the company he keeps, has long been a popular adage; more and more we are coming to believe that a man can be known by the surroundings in which he grew up. His house, his street, the country, the city, his work,—all leave their marks upon him.

The mental or psychological element in setting is often called "atmosphere." We say that the physical aspects of a scene produce a certain atmosphere or mood. This has already been explained as part of the mental point of view or purpose in descriptive writing. We have here to consider how this atmospheric element affects narrative. That certain physical surroundings and certain times of day and season influence conduct is traditional. The sea, the full moon, and soft music, when united, produce an effect which is quite irresistible. We know that the seasons, the forests, prairies, mountains, induce certain moods in us. The cold, the dark, the partly unintelligible and vast, produce uneasiness or fear; the light, the colorful, the familiar, the active, cause cheerfulness and gayety. New England scenery has not the same effect upon us as the Nebraska prairies. In addition to topography and climate, soil, mineral deposits, and forests are factors which determine the industries of a region. Occupations in turn affect physical and mental traits.

Setting, either physical or psychological, can be the dominant element in narrative. There are stories new and old in which the setting is more than a background for the conflict between people. The setting, considered either as inanimate nature or as the complete environment, may be one of the principal parties to the action. In Defoe's classic the action results from Crusoe's struggle, not against other persons, but against a strange environment. In Jack London's *To Build a Fire,* we have a single character fighting for his life against the arctic cold. Perhaps the best parts of Masefield's *Sard Harker* are those representing Harker's struggle against desert and tropical swamp. In such stories as Conrad's *Typhoon* and Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth,* the importance of the setting can hardly be overestimated.

The psychological factor in setting becomes dominant in what is called the "atmosphere" story. This is the story whose purpose is to produce a mental tone or mood in the reader. The writer must then, as did Poe, select details of setting which produce the required mental effect upon the characters and, with redoubled force, upon the reader. Poe contended that the writer should deliberately select the effect and then invent the appropriate action and scene. A perusal of *The Fall of the House of Usher* or the *Murders in the Rue Morgue* shows us that Poe at least was successful in the use of such a method. But Hawthorne, who was no less successful in writing the "atmosphere" story, first conceived the situation, then developed his effects. Joseph Conrad, whose method was more like Hawthorne's, was also a master of this type of story, and Wilkie Collins, who often resembles Poe, came near to being another.

The "atmosphere" story, it will be seen, is distinctly a "theme" story if we think of theme as we apply the term to musical composition. The mood—fear, horror, indignation, resignation,—whatever the author wishes to pro-

duce—becomes the theme of the story. However, the "atmosphere" story is usually purely emotional in its effect; sometimes the "theme" story has an intellectual element added. The dominance of setting and its psychological effect is apparent in Hawthorne's *Ambitious Guest;* yet there is also an intellectual element in the story: the author wishes again to impress upon us "the vanity of human wishes." The importance of setting in Lewis's *Main Street* is likewise evident. The book also has a prominent theme: "the pettiness of small-town life." Setting, then, whether considered merely as physical or as the emotional effect of the physical, is an important element in securing narrative unity.

EXERCISES ON NARRATIVE SETTING

1. Read Chapter One of Hardy's *Return of the Native.* What is the purpose of the detailed description of Egdon Heath?

2. Report on the element of setting, both physical and psychological, in:

W. H. Hudson, *Green Mansions*
Willa Cather, *My Antonia*
Frank Norris, *The Pit*
Stephen Crane, *The Open Boat*
——*The Red Badge of Courage*
Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth*
Lloyd Morris, *The Rebellious Puritan*

IX

The Beginning, the Middle, the End

We have observed that a narrative should have a theme, and unity of tone or of effect. It should also have unity of action. The incidents which make up the story or history should together make up a unit. They should be so closely related to each other that they cannot be separated

and so little related to what came before or what may follow after that what happened before our story began or what may follow after our story has closed is of no importance.

A central character, or the carrying through of all of the characters, does not necessarily give unity of action to a story. Biography, even though written from a point of view which insures unity of tone, may not have unity of action. The account of a man's adventures from birth to death will probably be several stories instead of one. Nowadays we have many novels which are life histories, but they are not excellent as examples of narrative structure, either simple or complex. For instance, Willa Cather's *My Antonia* is an excellent study of character and setting, and there are splendid narrative bits in it, but it is not an example of sustained narrative, of one complete action. On the other hand, *Green Mansions* is beautifully unified in theme and in character; in its poetic setting it is probably unsurpassed in English literature; and it is also a model of story-telling. Abel's forced exile among the superstitious Indians, his meeting and wooing of Rima, the bird woman of the jungles, her death at the hands of the Indians, and Abel's revenge, make up a complete action. The early life of Abel, his life before he entered the forest, we do not care to know; the author merely needs to account for his presence there. What Abel did during the remaining years of his life was either another story or not worth the telling. At any rate, these early and late years were no part of the single complete action of *Green Mansions*. Hudson knew where to begin and where to end.

Although narrative is fundamentally a matter of steps succeeding each other in time, just as life is a matter of hours and days, the story-teller is not obliged to tell his story in a straight time-sequence. The meaning of life is usually gotten only by observation of causes and results,

and since the story-teller, like all other artists, selects from life those elements which together form a significant pattern, which have a meaning, a theme, he may, once he has marked off his complete action, begin anywhere that is convenient to his purpose. He may begin with the climax and work back to the beginning, suspense being secured by curiosity as to the causes of the action. The news story usually tells who, when, where, and why, all in the first sentence or first paragraph, so that the busy reader can get the essentials in a minimum of time. The antecedent events, motives, probable results, and other pertinent facts are then given in detail and usually in an order of diminishing importance. This has a mechanical advantage in that if there is a lack of space, the story can be cut almost anywhere. But this is not an artistic form. It serves where the "story" is read because of interest in the subject matter, but it would hardly serve for fiction. The "feature" story of the newspaper uses all the devices of fiction to keep interest alive and growing until the end of the story.

A usual device is to begin with a dramatic incident, a critical moment for our characters, and when we can feel secure of our reader, to go back to the less exciting but necessary antecedents. The double- or triple-stranded yarn must continually leave one character or set of characters, and "loop back" to pick up those who make up the other thread or threads. Often a part of a story can be made more effective if told out of its chronology, just as a word, by being transposed out of its normal order in the sentence, gains in force. The unveiling of mysteries in stories is usually only a transposition of part of the story. Arthur Dimmesdale's confession in *The Scarlet Letter* supplies a part of the narrative which antedated most of the other events of the story, yet its effect would have been greatly minimized if the story had followed a chronological form. Often the author presents the broken

tragic character first, and then tells us his story. That is what Mrs. Wharton does in *Ethan Frome.*

Some stories can be told without preliminaries of any sort, but many need an introduction, or, as it is usually and rightly called, an exposition. When the story or its characters are such that the average reader would not readily believe or understand, or when the writer wishes his story to illustrate a theme, he prepares the mind of the reader by a preliminary exposition. In *Green Mansions* we are given a brief account of how this cultivated young Venezuelan came to be wandering in the unknown jungles. That is a usual form of exposition. Its purpose is to give as many facts as the reader would wish to know before he is ready to begin the story proper. Exposition, however, need not come at the beginning of the story; indeed, the more frequent practice is to weave in the necessary factual background as the narrative progresses, just as in drama exposition may continue to be introduced up to the last act.

In *Tennessee's Partner,* Bret Harte uses a very strange name for his principal character. He feels it incumbent upon him to explain this name, and to do so he must give a brief exposition of what names mean, and how they are come by in a mining camp.

> I do not think that we ever knew his real name. Our ignorance of it certainly never gave us any social inconvenience, for at Sandy Bar in 1854 most men were christened anew. Sometimes these appellatives were derived from some distinctiveness of dress, as in the case of "Dungaree Jack"; or from some peculiarity of habit, as shown in "Saleratus Bill," so-called from an undue proportion of that chemical in his daily bread; or from some unlucky slip, as exhibited in "The Iron Pirate," a mild, inoffensive man, who earned that baleful title by his unfortunate mispronunciation of the term "iron pyrites." Perhaps this may have been the beginning of a rude heraldry; but I am constrained to think that it was because a man's real name in that day rested solely upon his

own unsupported statement. "Call yourself Clifford, do you?" said Boston, addressing a timid newcomer with infinite scorn; "hell is full of such Cliffords!" He then introduced the unfortunate man, whose name happened to be really Clifford, as "Jaybird Charley,"—an unhallowed inspiration of the moment that clung to him ever after.

But to return to Tennessee's Partner, whom we never knew by any other than this relative title. That he had ever existed as a separate and distinct individuality we only learned later.

When we have finished the story we see that the explanation was well worth its space, for that strange name, which the exposition leads us to accept without question, symbolizes the close union between these two men. Tennessee's Partner without Tennessee had not even a name. The gambler and highwayman was his other self. How could he quarrel with him, and how could he live after the other had been hanged?

Narrative endings may be comic, cheerful, pathetic, or tragic. We shall give little space to analyzing the first two. One can appreciate or achieve a comic ending if one is gifted with a sense of humor, otherwise not. We may intelligently argue whether the conclusion of Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* or of Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor* is tragic or pathetic; but there is no more point in arguing whether Mark Twain's *Leaping Frog* is comical or not than there is in arguing whether one should or should not like huckleberry pie. At best our sense of the comic is not very stable. The jokes of last year now bore us, and the fashions of five years ago are now comic. The cheerful ending, of course, is the one in which difficulties disappear, estrangements are ended, and we leave the principals to live happily ever after. But as was said earlier, the happy ending cannot merely be tacked on, as was done in the movie version of Hardy's *Tess*. Saving the character must not cause the death of the story. The cheerful conclusion, like every

other conclusion, must be brought about by the characters through their own exertions, not by *deus ex machina*.

The pathetic ending is the unhappy one in which the catastrophe is due to the inherent weakness of the character. The story evokes sympathy, but not admiration. We feel that the pathetic person has done all that his intelligence and strength permitted him to do, but, unhappily, his intelligence and strength were not very great. The pathetic story delineates the downfall of good, well-intentioned, lovable, but weak characters. Stories in which rather weak persons are entangled in a net of difficulties from which they are unable to extricate themselves or even put up a very good fight, are pathetic. The story of Falder in Galsworthy's *Justice* is pathetic. A weak but kindly and generous young clerk falls in love with a married woman whose husband is a brutal drunkard, and to get money to take her out of England he raises a check. His crime is detected; he is convicted and broken by three years of prison confinement. Released, he has not the courage to face his office mates in the new job which the prison officials had secured for him, and he leaves. Later he forges references, drifts from bad to worse, and at last returns to his old employers to beg for mercy. Unluckily, Mrs. Honeywill, who has also gone from bad to worse, shows up to prejudice further the senior partner against his erring employee, and, still more unluckily, the officers appear searching for Falder, who, still on probation, has not reported to the police as he should have. As they take the young man away, he breaks from them, jumps over the stair, and kills himself.

This is a pathetic story,—pathetic partly because Falder is a good but weak character, and partly because all the "breaks" of fortune are against him. *If* he had never been asked to substitute for the clerk usually sent to the bank; *if* certain other things had not happened just as they did and when they did, the ending might have been

different. It is plausible enough that they should have happened so, but it does not seem inevitable.

And there we have one of the chief differences between the pathetic ending and the tragic. In the tragic story there is no *if*. Moreover, the principal character, though defeated, is superior to defeat. He is a strong character overcome by still greater strength. But while we demand that he fight valiantly, we do not demand that he be perfect. Aristotle was of the opinion that he must have some weakness, some flaw, else how could his fall be accounted for? Others have thought of the catastrophe as being brought about by fate, or by the conflict of one good against another. In *Othello* we see the strong man undone by a weakness—jealousy. In *Œdipus the King,* we have the fulfillment of prophesied fate. In *Antigone* the heroine is torn between her duty which bids her bury her brother, and her duty to the king, who forbids the burial.

It is, of course, the ending which brings out the mental point of view, the æsthetic or moral purpose of the writer. By producing the desired reaction in the reader, he achieves his purpose, makes clear his meaning. He can increase our understanding of human motives and actions, make us laugh at the follies of life, make us sympathize with the weak or unfortunate, reconcile us to the complex scheme of nature in which the good of the whole is everything and the individual is of slight importance.

X

Composition of the Narrative

In the preceding pages we have talked a good deal about the completed narrative, very little about the process of bringing this narrative into being. It is highly useful to analyze the type of thing we are going to do before we set out to do it. No practical person would attempt to build

either chairs or automobiles, for instance, without first studying the construction of those already built. But he could not stop with this analysis; before he could himself construct chairs or automobiles he would have to begin at the beginning, and examine the actual process of making these articles. This principle applies to writing of all sorts—especially, perhaps, to the narrative.

What shall I write about? This is often the first question a student of narrative asks his teacher. It is a natural question, yet no one can really answer it but the student himself. He should write about that of which he has something to say; that is, he must have a story of his own which he really wants to tell. All good narrative must be interesting, but it is almost impossible to write an interesting story which one has no appetite for telling. Some there are who, for this reason, write best about themselves—most honest people would confess that they could find no more interesting subject. But one cannot always write about himself. Next to himself, other actual people —those one sees and knows, or living celebrities, or historical characters, literary and otherwise—often prove the most interesting. Or one may find himself wholly concerned with imaginative personages. Parallel with these are real or imaginary situations, connected or not, as the case may be, with personal experiences.

Without making any attempt to go into the whole problem of subject matter,—futile in the space available here —let us at least venture a few suggestions. Of autobiographical, biographical, and historical sketches, perhaps enough has been said in other places (in Chapters II, IX, and X, on the subjects of originality and plan and materials, and in Section III of the present chapter, on the selection of a dominant motive). Anecdotes and incidents—brief recounting of "good stories" one has heard or of brief yarns of oneself and others—require much practice and skill to be successfully written, yet do not

offer serious difficulties from the point of view of subject matter. The story is usually there ready for the telling. Other narratives, such as those which grow out of personal experience, but do not necessarily stick to it in all details, or such as are largely or entirely imaginary, present more of a problem.

In casting about for a subject upon which to write, the safest thing to do is to begin as near home as possible. It is difficult, more difficult than one first imagines, to furnish the proper background for a story set in unfamiliar surroundings. The many failures of students who try to write stories of the South Sea islands, or of pirate sailing ships, or of storms at sea, when they have never seen these things, proves this indisputably.

But what, some student may ask, if we do not find our home scenes interesting, are even bored by them? What if we find it difficult to distinguish between what is significant and what not, in things so near to us? These are entirely legitimate questions. The problem is how to find material which we know well enough to treat intelligently, which is yet sufficiently interesting to make us want to write about it. But perhaps there is a way out of the difficulty. A student who had made an A grade in her course in narrative had this to say about her choice of subject matter for her stories:

> Most of my themes this semester have been written on subjects derived from my interest in our farm. I have let my sketches stay in this realm of my interest because I know this life well enough to be truthful in what I write, yet I am away from the scene enough so that I idealize the life to some extent. I haven't arrived at the place yet where I can get sufficient perspective on a situation right at hand to write on it convincingly. Therefore, for the time being, I shall continue to write on things that I know about, have an interest in, and are yet remote enough to give me a proper perspective of them.

Here is indeed the answer to most objections against writing about things near to our own experience. Even young people were once younger, have had experiences already remote enough to be seen in proper perspective, with enough glamor about them to lend interest. The autumn scene is romantic to most of us before the next spring comes around; the camping trip of last summer already has a charm for us. An instance of the value of drawing upon one's own past, no matter how young one may be, was that of Miss Popowska, winner of the Harper's Prose Contest for 1927. The prize story was based on certain experiences in Miss Popowska's life preceding her tenth birthday, experiences, she tells us, which stood out in her mind with great distinctness when she began to write, and excited most vivid emotions as she went on.

Closely related to the narrative based on personal experience and the home scene, is that which springs out of a mental experience. An idea comes with startling force, and one weaves a story around it. Such is probably the genesis of many of our theme and purpose stories. Such, one may conceive, was the beginning of Walpole's story, *The Tiger*. Here a somewhat sensitive Englishman—Homer Brown—comes to New York, enjoys it at first, but later, on a second visit, becomes possessed with the idea that all New York is a great jungle of wild beasts,—the skyscrapers and subways, giant cages from which these beasts may spring at any moment; the automobiles, themselves beasts, with great glowing eyes at night, ever ready to bear down upon their prey. Obsessed with the notion that his own particular beast—a tiger—will get him some time, Brown stays on, until, one night, he stops in fascinated horror before an oncoming car—his tiger, he thinks—and is killed. Not long before writing this story, Walpole had visited New York. Had he, some day, as he stood, hemmed in by the Wall Street canyon or oppressed by the heavy clangor of Sixth Avenue, been himself seized

with a powerful impression of all this great city as a jungle of wild animals? It seems likely; where else would the story have had its origin?

Reading will frequently suggest subject matter for a narrative. In such cases, the framework of the story may come almost ready made, or there may be merely a suggestion to start the mind at work on its own path. In either case—we are barring plagiarism, of course—the writer must go on through the regular processes of story construction. How a story idea may thus originate and how it may be worked up, can be suggested by an example.

A teacher who had read a certain story and was convinced that it could be traced back to Crevecœur's *Letters of an American Farmer,* tried an experiment with his class, none of whom had read the story in question. He read the extract which he thought to be the source of the published story to his class, and asked each student to try constructing an outline for a narrative which might suggest itself to him during or after the reading.

The passage from Crevecœur was about snakes. The author had talked of the copperhead and of the terrible death of a man bitten by one, and had passed to rattlesnakes. He told how the Indians caught and ate them, how he had once seen a tamed one, "as gentle as you can possibly imagine a reptile to be." And then he related an incident connected with a rattlesnake and his bite:

> One of this species was the cause, some years ago, of a most deplorable accident which I shall relate to you, as I had it from the widow and mother of the victims. A Dutch farmer of the Minisink went to mowing, with his negroes, in his boots, a precaution used to prevent being stung. Inadvertently he trod on a snake, which immediately flew at his legs; and as it drew back in order to renew its blow, one of his negroes cut it in two with his scythe. They prosecuted their work, and returned home; at night the farmer pulled off his boots and went to bed; and was soon

after attacked with a strange sickness at his stomach; he swelled, and before a physician could be sent for, died. The sudden death of this man did not cause much inquiry; the neighborhood wondered, as is usual in such cases, and without any further examination the corpse was buried. A few days after, the son put on his father's boots, and went to the meadow; at night he pulled them off, went to bed, and was attacked with the same symptoms about the same time, and died in the morning. A little before he expired the doctor came, but was not able to assign what could be the cause of so singular a disorder; however, rather than appear wholly at a loss before the country people, he pronounced both father and son to have been bewitched. Some weeks after, the widow sold all the movables for the benefit of the younger children; and the farm was leased. One of the neighbors, who bought the boots, presently put them on, and was attacked in the same manner as the other two had been; but this man's wife being alarmed by what had happened in the former family, despatched one of her negroes for an eminent physician, who fortunately having heard something of the dreadful affair, guessed at the cause, applied oil, etc., and recovered the man. The boots which had been so fatal, were then carefully examined; and he found that the two fangs of the snake had been left in the leather, after being wrenched out of their sockets by the strength with which the snake had drawn back its head. The bladders which contained the poison and several of the small nerves were still fresh, and adhered to the boot. The unfortunate father and son had been poisoned by pulling off these boots, in which action they imperceptibly scratched their legs with the points of the fangs, through the hollow of which some of this astonishing poison was conveyed. (Letter X)

Of the "outlines" for stories written in response to this reading, two of the best are given below. They are entirely different: one is a complete, though brief, anecdote from personal experience, the other an excellent plan for a complex plotted story. Yet each shows how a tale can have its beginnings in reading:

SNAKE À LA CARTE

It would be a great disappointment to many Northerners to meet a West Virginian who could not tell of at least one personal experience with a snake,—or snakes, for some folks' minds thrive only on plurals. I smile as I think of the "foreign" conception of our state, but meet the requirements by retelling my own snake story, which I insist (as what story teller would not?) really happened at the dormitory of my old boarding school.

Maggie Ballard, carrying a dish in which lay some white meat, entered our room and offered to let us taste "something new and really good." After asking whether she herself had eaten any, and receiving an affirmative answer (which I readily believed because I knew Maggie), I risked a liberal bite. My roommate, as gullible—or should I say, as curious?—as I, ate of the mysterious food. Then we were asked to guess what it was. Our surmises agreed. We believed that we had eaten fish, and admitted that we liked the flavor. Our judgment was soon corrected, however, for just as Maggie was leaving us, she announced that she had given us boiled rattlesnake. My roommate became instantly ill. It is kinder to omit the details of what happened during the next two hours. I was not permitted to call the matron. The patient preferred to die a private death—although, as I remember the affair, those were not her exact words. At last, in real concern, I hunted Maggie and demanded that she do something—anything. And she did. She cut six long bristles from her ivory hair brush, put them on the dish with the remaining bits of meat, came to our room, introduced the bristles as "just a few of the bones of a weakfish," insisted that the snake idea was just a joke —and my roommate's recovery was instantaneous.[1]

HIS FATHER'S BOOTS

I should introduce the picture of a harsh, unyielding farmer, whose sole aim in life is to obtain all he can from the soil. He is a hard task-master and his children fear him. His eldest son hates him and rebels against him secretly, lacking the courage of open rebellion. As far back as he can remember, it seems to the boy that the heavy steps of his father have controlled the life of

[1] A student theme, by Ione E. Kunkel.

the farm. When the menacing steps of the father are heard, the children cease to play or quarrel and hasten, with scared faces, to busy themselves about some task. They always listen in a kind of fascinated dread to the scrape of his boots as he enters the house. The boy remembers how, when a very small boy, he used to awake suddenly in the night, and lie trembling,—waiting, waiting for the loathed step of his father to come and announce to him that it was time to be up and doing.

The boy never has the courage to lift his eyes to his father's face,—he sees only his father's feet. His father wears heavy boots, —boots as ruthless as himself. It seems to the boy that he is crushing and stamping out the life of everyone about him with those boots of his. One day, while they are plowing in the fields, the boy hears his father cry out. He sees a rattler drawing back his head, preparing to attack the terrible boots. The boy feels a thrill of admiration for the snake. But the farm hand kills the reptile, and the boy goes home, feeling somehow that the snake has not been given a fair chance. That night the father dies, attacked by a strange illness. The bewildered boy realizes that he is to assume his father's place. A neighbor pats him on the head and says, "You'll have to step into your father's boots now, poor lad!" An odd fancy impels him to go stare at his father's boots. They are silent now, but still formidable. It is the boy's feet however, which will now have power. Defiantly, he pulls the boots on, and goes about his tasks. He is almost frightened when he hears how like his father's hated tread his own has become. But he is overcome by a feeling of power; it is his feet which will now be feared. That night, he, too, is attacked by the strange illness. In his delirium, it seems to him that his dead father is seeking revenge and is about to punish him for his presumptuousness. As he dies, he wildly cries out something about the boots, but his family do not understand his meaning. And then, in the *dénouement,* it is revealed that snake's fangs have been imbedded in the boots.[1]

These two sketches suggest a great deal about the whole process of building narrative. First, regardless of the immediate experience, each writes the story that it is in him

[1] A student theme, by Jean Gurkin.

to write, the story which comes to him in response to such elements of his own past life as present, at the reading, contacts with this particular set of ideas. To the one, an account of snakes recalls a personal experience from boarding school days. To the other, the incident of the poisoned boots, worn first by the father, then by the son, sets the mind at work imaginatively upon a situation in which character and the relationship between the father and son are the important element. The work of both students is satisfactory; each did what he should have done under the circumstances. But, in proportion to its greater complexity, there are more phases of good story-telling illustrated in the work of the second student.

Given an idea for a narrative, the thing to do is to work it out. It needs to be reflected upon, talked about, outlined. An outline is only one step in the progress of the narrative toward its final form, but it is a highly important and necessary step. Note how much constructive work has preceded this outline we are considering:

(1) Characters have been created. An indefinite "Dutch farmer," without distinguishing marks of any kind, is made into a real person, with clearly realized characteristics—he is harsh, unyielding, grasping; his children dread his approach. The son likewise becomes a distinct individual.

(2) The method of treating the characters has also been determined. It is clear that the father is to be presented objectively, the son, in part at least, subjectively; we shall see the father in speech and action only, but we shall know not only what the son says and does, but also what goes on in his mind. It is to be very much the son's story, too; he, not the father, is to be the principal character, it is clear.

(3) The author has conceived of a dramatic situation for these characters, one of conflict, the more bitter because it is largely secret and suppressed, the more poignant

because it is based on an unnatural hatred of a son for his parent.

(4) Further than this, working forward with clearly-conceived characters in a vividly dramatic situation, the writer has thought his story through to a *dénouement* of extraordinary piquancy. Secretly rejoiced to see the father die, the son expectantly slips on the boots, which are to him a symbol of new freedom and power, but which instead—and this is grimly ironic—bring him to a swift death.

(5) The writer has already conceived several details of striking artistic piquancy—details that reënforce, set off, lend spice, to character and incident. Such is the heavy tread of the boots, indicating, first, the harshness and power of the father, second, a premonition of retribution upon the head of the son.

This is one way in which narratives grow. We see here how the elastic, creative mind, once presented with the proper seed-thoughts for a story, stretches to its task. Most of the essential steps preparatory to the actual writing of the story have been taken:

1. Characters have been created.
2. The method of treating these characters has been determined.
3. A dramatic and interesting situation has been conceived.
4. The story has been followed through to its end.
5. Vivid detail, which is to lend artistic piquancy to the story, has been invented.

The writer is almost ready to begin his story. "Almost," for the reason that certain important details are not yet settled:

First, though the writer has accepted the general setting indicated by Crevecœur, he has not yet selected a particular scene for his action. To be convincing, the story must be set in a place where rattlesnakes are still found; it

needs, moreover, to be somewhat isolated, for the facts outlined suggest a rather primitive rural life. The writer should, of course, be sufficiently familiar with his scene to present his characters and their background with truth.

Second, the characters must be named. The naming of characters is not at all a minor part of good story-telling. Expert writers spend much care upon this problem, and beginners certainly cannot afford to neglect it. Good titles and appropriate names often do almost everything for a story. Except in quite rare instances, the practice of simply designating one's characters as "a man," or a "beautiful woman," "a hunter," or "a wood-chopper" is to be avoided. It is fitting for fairy tales and other primitive types only.

Third, how and where shall this story begin? What is to be the first incident, or scene? Just what incidents shall be selected to lead up to the climactic scenes? How far, in point of time represented should the opening be from the climax and end? Shall the story open dramatically, with a scene and dialogue, or shall it open with exposition? These are questions the writer must settle for himself, of course. There are no rules, fortunately—else all stories would be written alike. So far as principle can help, we may say this, however. The opening of a short story should be as near the climax as possible. Most young writers try to include altogether too much material in their stories. Their outlines too often sound like plans for novels—and novels of the two-volume variety at that. It is usually better to narrow down to one or two or three incidents well conceived and well developed than to spread thinly over a dozen unconvincing scenes. It is also a good thing to use dialogue wherever possible. Dramatic scenes lend vitality to narrative. As to the exact point at which a narrative shall begin, or as to the method of opening, the writer himself must be judge. He may need to experiment with two or three beginnings. Likewise with the

incidents; the first ones he chooses may be later rejected, or others may be added. Whatever he finally selects must fit its purpose, must be interesting and significant, must prepare for later incident, or contribute to a unified effect and a swift movement of the story to a successful end. These are things the student who prepared the outline for the story on snakes had not yet settled, though we can be sure that one who had begun to meet his problems so ingeniously would not fail on these remaining ones; certainly he could not fail at this point and still write a satisfactory narrative.

The foregoing discussion is at best only suggestive of what might be said on how to write narrative. It is a large subject, almost as large as life itself. But practice is always more valuable than precept, and perhaps these few hints will be sufficient to guide the student through some interesting experiments of his own in the delightful art of story-telling.

EXERCISES IN NARRATIVE WRITING

1. Recount a personal experience in which you were the chief actor.

2. Relate an experience in which you were a minor person in the action.

3. Tell the story of an automobile accident, fire, or other exciting event of which you were a spectator.

4. Write a story, based on fact or not as you choose, in which you employ the omniscient point of view.

5. Write a biographical sketch of a great writer or scientist, selecting details which shall be convincing and significant, and which make toward a unified effect.

6. Write an autobiography which will have strict unity of purpose; one which brings out the dominant traits of your character.

7. Write a 500-word account of some adventure which you have had or know about. Select details which will re-create the adventure for your reader, and at the same time make the total significance of the experience very plain.

8. Write a character sketch of yourself in which you bring out, by recounting certain incidents, the chief traits of your personality.

9. Write an account of your childhood, giving careful attention to environment.

10. Recall some complicated adventure in which you have taken part. Write the story, taking care to make the scene of the action perfectly clear.

11. Recall or invent an action which inspired a very strong emotion, such as awe or terror. Tell the story, bringing out the factors in the scene which helped to induce this mood.

12. Present as vividly as you can in a single action the character of some one you know or have imagined.

13. With the extract from *Katreena* in mind, present a character in a series of minor incidents that will make some unusual climactic action seem probable.

14. Present a character through his own thoughts—through the method of "subjective analysis." (See the exercises in Chapter X.)

15. Tell a story largely through the subjective method—showing what goes on in the mind of the character as he passes through the action or experience.

16. Observe the paragraph division in the examples of narrative which have been quoted in this chapter. Can you formulate any principle for the making of narrative paragraphs?

17. Write a dialogue in which two or more persons, in discussing some topic of current interest, reveal their characters.

18. Write a narrative on a subject suggested by one of the following topics. Try to tell the whole story in dialogue.

(a) Choosing a Caddy—A Scene at the First Hole
(b) Motorists Exchange Experiences
(c) Over the Back Fence
(d) At the Village Grocery
(e) About Examinations
(f) A Man and His Cigar
(g) A Broken-Down Ford and Its Owner
(h) Any Student to any Teacher
(i) "Mrs. Jones says . . . "
(j) A *Lucky Strike* to an *Old Gold*

19. Write a story based on some true but strange occurrence. If the end is unusual or seems improbable, make all preparation

for it without "giving away" the story. Make the motive for every act seem sufficient.

20. Write the story you want to write, based on your own past life or something you have seen; upon some mental experience which you wish to put into concrete narrative form; or upon your reading.

First make a plan for your narrative similar to the one for *His Father's Boots*. Include the names of your characters, outlining the characteristics of each as fully as you can.

Write out your opening paragraphs.
List your incidents, outlining each as fully as you can.
Show how you plan to end the story.

21. Study the following story, noting:

The title
The beginning
The selection of incidents
The order in which the story is told
Descriptive detail and background
The characterization—
  by analysis
  by description
  by dialogue
  by action
The names of characters
The method of presenting the characters—
  subjectively
  objectively
The point of view from which the story is told
Preparation, or foreshadowing
The conclusion

THE REAPING RACE [1]

by Liam O'Flaherty

At dawn the reapers were already in the rye field. It was the big rectangular field owned by James McDara, the retired engineer. The field started on the slope of a hill and ran down gently to the sea-road that was covered

[1] From *The Dublin Magazine.*

with sand. It was bound by a low stone fence, and the yellow heads of the rye-stalks leaned out over the fence, all round in a thick mass, jostling and crushing one another as the morning breeze swept over them with a swishing sound.

McDara himself, a white-haired old man in grey tweeds, was standing outside the fence on the sea-road, waving his stick and talking to a few people who had gathered even at that early hour. His brick-red face was all excitement, and he waved his blackthorn stick as he talked in a loud voice to the men about him.

"I measured it out yesterday," he was saying, "as even as it could be done. Upon my honour there isn't an inch in the difference between one strip and another of the three strips. D'ye see? I have laid lines along the length of the field so they can't go wrong. Come here and I'll show ye."

He led the men along from end to end of the field and showed how he had measured it off into three even parts and marked the strips with lines laid along the ground.

"Now, it couldn't be fairer," cried the old man, as excited as a schoolboy. "When I fire my revolver they'll all start together, and the first couple to finish their strip gets a five pound note."

The peasants nodded their heads and looked at old McDara seriously, although each one of them thought he was crazy to spend five pounds on the cutting of a field that could be cut for two pounds. They were, however, almost as excited as McDara himself, for the three best reapers in the whole island of Inverara had entered for the competition. They were now at the top of the field on the slope of the hill ready to commence. Each had his wife with him to tie the sheaves as they were cut and bring food and drink.

They had cast lots for the strips by drawing three pieces of seaweed from McDara's hat. Now they had taken up position on their strips awaiting the signal. Although the sun had not yet warmed the earth and the sea breeze was cold, each man had stripped to his shirt. The

shirts were open at the chest and the sleeves were rolled above the elbow. They wore grey woollen shirts. Around his waist each had a multi-coloured "crios," a long knitted belt made of pure wool. Below that they wore a white frieze drawers with the ends tucked into woollen stockings that were embroidered at the tops. Their feet were protected by raw-hide shoes. None of them wore a cap. The women all wore red petticoats, with a little shawl tied around their heads.

On the left were Michael Gill and his wife, Susan. Michael was a long wiry man, with fair hair that came down over his forehead and was cropped to the bone all round the skull. He had a hook nose, and his lean jaws were continually moving backwards and forwards. His little blue eyes were fixed on the ground, and his long white eyelashes almost touched his cheek-bones, as if he slept. He stood motionless, with his reaping-hook in his right hand and his left hand in his belt. Now and again he raised his eyelashes, listening for the signal to commence. His wife was almost as tall as himself, but she was plump and rosy-cheeked. A silent woman, she stood there thinking of her eight-months-old son whom she had left at home in charge of her mother.

In the middle Johnny Bodkin stood with his arms folded and his legs spread wide apart, talking to his wife in a low serious voice. He was a huge man, with fleshy limbs and neck, and black hair that had gone bald over his forehead. His forehead was very white and his cheeks were very red. He always frowned, twitching his black eyebrows. His wife, Mary, was short, thin, sallow-faced, and her upper teeth protruded slightly over her lower lip.

On the right was Pat Considine and his wife, Kate. Kate was very big and brawny, with a freckled face and a very marked moustache on her upper lip. She had a great mop of sandy-coloured curly hair that kept coming undone. She talked to her husband in a loud, gruff masculine voice, full of good humour. Her husband, on the other hand, was a small man, small and slim, and beginning to get wrinkles in his face, although he was

not yet forty. His face had once been a brick-red colour, but now it was becoming sallow. He had lost most of his front teeth. He stood loosely, grinning towards McDara, his little loose slim body hiding its strength.

Then McDara waved his stick. He lifted his arm. A shot rang out. The reaping race began. In one movement the three men sank to their right knees like soldiers on parade at musketry practice. Their left hands in the same movement closed about a bunch of rye-stalks. The curved reaping hooks whirled in the air, and then there was a crunching sound, the sound that hungry cows make eating long fresh grass in spring. Then three little slender bunches of rye-stalks lay flat on the dewy grass beneath the fence, one bunch behind each reaper's bent left leg. The three women waited in nervous silence for the first sheaf. It would be an omen of victory or defeat. One, two, three, four bunches . . . Johnny Bodkin, snorting like a furious horse, was dropping his bunches almost without stopping. With a loud cheer he raised his reaping hook in the air and spat on it, crying "First Sheaf!" His wife dived at it with both hands. Separating a little bunch of stalks, she encircled the head of the sheaf and then bound it with amazing rapidity, her long thin fingers moving like knitting needles. The other reapers and their wives had not paused to look. All three reapers had cut their first sheaves and their wives were on their knees tying.

Working in the same furious manner in which he had begun, Bodkin was soon far ahead of his competitors. He was cutting his sheaves in an untidy manner, and he was leaving hummocks behind him on the ground owing to the irregularities of his strokes, but his speed and strength were amazing. His great hands whirled the hook and closed on the stalks in a ponderous manner, and his body hurtled along like the carcase of an elephant trotting through a forest, but there was a rhythm in the never-ending movement of his limbs that was not without beauty. And behind came his wife, tying, tying speedily,

with her hard face gathered together in a serious frown like a person meditating on a grave decision.

Considine and his wife were second. Considine, now that he was in action, showed surprising strength and an agility that was goat-like. When his lean, long, bony arms moved to slash the rye, muscles sprang up all over his bent back like an intricate series of springs being pressed. Every time he hopped on his right knee to move along his line of reaping he emitted a sound like a groan cut short. His wife, already perspiring heavily, worked almost on his heels, continually urging him on, laughing and joking in her habitual loud hearty voice.

Michael Gill and his wife came last. Gill had begun to reap with the slow methodic movements of a machine driven at low pressure. He continued at exactly the same pace, never changing, never looking up to see where his opponents were. His long lean hands moved noiselessly, and only the sharp crunching rush of the teeth of his reaping hook through the yellow stalks of the rye could be heard. His long drooping eyelashes were always directed towards the point where his hook was cutting. He never looked behind to see had he enough for a sheaf before beginning another. All his movements were calculated beforehand, calm, monotonous, deadly accurate. Even his breathing was light, and came through his nose like one who sleeps healthily. His wife moved behind him in the same manner, tying each sheaf daintily, without exertion.

As the day advanced people gathered from all quarters watching the reapers. The sun rose into the heavens. There was a fierce heat. Not a breath of wind. The rye-stalks no longer moved. They stood in perfect silence, their heads a whitish colour, their stalks golden. Already there was a large irregular gash in the rye, ever increasing. The bare patch, green with little clover plants that had been sown with the rye, was dotted with sheaves, already whitening in the hot sun. Through the hum of conversation the regular crunching of the reaping hooks could be heard.

A little before noon Bodkin had cut half his strip. A stone had been placed on the marking line at half-way, and when Bodkin reached the stone he stood up with the stone in his hand and yelled: "This is a proof," he cried, "that there was never a man born in the island of Inverara as good as Johnny Bodkin." There was an answering cheer from the crowd on the fence, but big Kate Considine humorously waved a sheaf above her head and yelled in her rough man's voice: "The day is young yet, Bodkin of the soft flesh!" The crowd roared with laughter, and Bodkin fumed, but he did not reply. His wits were not very sharp. Gill and his wife took no notice. They did not raise their eyes from the reaping.

Bodkin's wife was the first to go for the mid-day meal. She brought a can full of cold tea and a whole oven cake of white flour, cut in large pieces, each piece coated heavily with butter. She had four eggs, too, boiled hard. The Bodkin couple had no children, and on that account they could afford to live well, at least far better than the other peasants. Bodkin just dropped his reaping hook and ravenously devoured three of the eggs, while his wife, no less hungrily, ate the fourth. Then Bodkin began to eat the bread and butter and drink the cold tea with as much speed as he had reaped the rye. It took him and his wife exactly two minutes and three-quarters to finish that great quantity of food and drink. Out of curiosity, Gallagher, the doctor, counted the time down on the shore road. As soon as they had finished eating they set to work again as fiercely as ever.

Considine had come level with Bodkin, just as Bodkin resumed work, and instead of taking a rest for their meal, Considine and his wife ate in the ancient fashion current among Inverara peasants during contests of the kind. Kate fed her husband as he worked, with buttered oven cake. Now and again she handed him the tea-can and he paused to take a drink. In that way he was still almost level with Bodkin when he had finished eating. The spectators were greatly excited at this eagerness on the part

of Considine, and some began to say that he would win the race.

Nobody took any notice of Gill and his wife, but they had never stopped to eat, and they had steadily drawn nearer to their opponents. They were still some distance in the rear, but they seemed quite fresh, whereas Bodkin appeared to be getting exhausted, handicapped by his heavy meal, and Considine was obviously using up the reserves of his strength. Then, when they reached the stone at half-way, Gill quietly laid down his hook and told his wife to bring the meal. She brought it from the fence, buttered oaten bread and a bottle of new milk, with oatmeal in the bottom of the bottle. They ate slowly, and then rested for a while. People began to jeer at them when they saw them resting, but they took no notice. After about twenty minutes they got up to go to work again. A derisive cheer arose, and an old man cried out: "Yer a disgrace to me name, Michael." "Never mind, father," called Michael, "the race isn't finished yet." Then he spat on his hands and seized his hook once more.

Then, indeed, excitement rose to a high pitch, because the Gill couple resumed work at a great speed. Their movements were as mechanical and regular as before, but they worked at almost twice the speed. People began to shout at them. Then betting began among the gentry. Until now the excitement had not been intense, because it seemed a foregone conclusion that Bodkin would win since he was so far ahead. Now, however, Bodkin's supremacy was challenged. He still was a long way ahead of Gill, but he was visibly tired, and his hook made mistakes now and again gripping the earth with its point. Bodkin was lathered with sweat. He now began to look behind him at Gill, irritated by the shouts of the people.

Just before four o'clock Considine suddenly collapsed, utterly exhausted. He had to be carried over to the fence. A crowd gathered around, and the rector, Mr. Robertson, gave him a swig from his brandy flask that revived him. He made an effort to go back to work, but he was

unable to rise. "Stay there," said his wife angrily, "you're finished. I'll carry on myself." Rolling up her sleeves farther on her fat arms, she went back to the reaping hook, and with a loud yell began to reap furiously. "Bravo," cried McDara, "I'll give the woman a special prize. Gallagher," he cried, hitting the doctor on the shoulder, "after all . . . the Irish race . . . ye know what I mean . . . man, alive."

But all centred their attention on the struggle between Bodkin and Gill. Spurred by rage, Bodkin had made a supreme effort, and he began to gain ground once more. His immense body, moving from left to right and back again across his line of reaping, seemed to swallow the long yellow rye stalks, so quickly did they fall before it. And as the sheaf was completed his lean wife grabbed it up and tied it. But still, when Bodkin paused at five o'clock to cast a look behind him, there was Gill coming with terrible regularity. Bodkin suddenly felt all the weariness of the day overcome him.

It struck him first in the shape of an intense thirst. He sent his wife up to the fence for their extra can of tea. When she came back with it he began to drink. But the more he drank the thirstier he became. His friends in the crowd of spectators shouted at him in warning, but his thirst maddened him. He kept drinking. The shore wall and victory were very near now. He kept looking towards it in a dazed way as he whirled his hook. And he kept drinking. Then his senses began to dull. He became sleepy. His movements became almost unconscious. He only saw the wall, and he fought on. He began to talk to himself. He reached the wall at one end of his strip. He had only to cut down to the other end and finish. Three sheaves more, and then . . . Best man in Inverara . . . Five Pound Note . . .

But just then a ringing cheer came to his ears, and the cry rose on the air: "Gill has won." Bodkin collapsed with a groan.

Chapter XV

REPORTS AND EXAMINATIONS

I

Reports

The Common Kinds of Reports.—In many college courses the student is asked by the instructor to read a book which supplements the regularly assigned reading matter of the course, and to make a report upon it to the class, orally or in the form of a paper to be read. In a class in English history, for example, he might be asked to report upon Strachey's *Queen Victoria,* or Maurois' *Disraeli.* In a class in sociology he might be asked to report upon Hudson's *The Crystal Age* or upon Butler's *Erewhon.* Frequently a student is asked to investigate some problem related to the work of the course and to present the result of his work. In a class in political science, for example, he might be asked to report upon the city manager plan of municipal administration: its origin, nature, and prevalence. In a course in English literature he might be required to report upon the poetic drama of the Romantic Revival.

Reports on reading—the Book Report, and the Report Based on Library Research—are probably most common in the experience of the student. But there is also the report based on scientific or other investigation—the report based primarily on observation of physical data. Probably the simplest form of Investigation Report, as we shall

call this type, is the account of an experiment in chemistry or physics, or of a field-trip in geology. Advanced students in the physical sciences, and in sociology, psychology, and political science are frequently required to make investigations and to report upon their findings. The dissertation of the candidate for advanced degrees, and many of the articles published by scientists are Investigation Reports.[1]

In the business and professional world report writing is extremely important. Managers of business concerns usually make annual reports to the stockholders; presidents of colleges and universities, superintendents of public schools, governors of states, and other executives make annual reports to those to whom they are responsible. Period Reports, as this type is called, are usually printed, and often contain several hundred pages of information.

In business and in civil affairs we also have the Investigation Report. A business concern or a city council often calls in an expert of some kind to study conditions and to make recommendations for improvements. A company may feel dissatisfied with its marketing system and may wish to get expert opinion before making any change. A city may feel the need of a new charter or a new system of traffic management. Usually before any radical changes are made, a well-known authority is asked to study the situation and to make a detailed report.

Large construction projects, street improvements, surveys, and other works which require months or years to complete, are usually carried out on a schedule which is estimated in advance. But interested parties may require information from time to time as to the progress of the work; and to meet the demand for this sort of information there is the Report of Progress.

[1] See the articles by D. F. Fraser-Harris in *The Forum* for May and June, 1928, and the articles by Dublin and Gifford in *Harper's* for January, 1927, and May, 1928, respectively.

Attitude of the Report Writer.—One who is to make a report must set about his work with an open mind. His business is first and last to get the facts, and on the basis of facts alone to draw the conclusions which the facts warrant. So far as it is humanly possible, the investigator must put aside his prejudices and all notions of the subject which were formed before the complete evidence had been obtained. Often, of course, one may begin an investigation with a theory or hypothesis which he hopes the investigation will verify; but there is always great danger that he will become so attached to his theory that he will look only at the facts which bear out that theory, and that he will ignore facts which controvert his hypothesis or which otherwise tend to embarrass him. If there are two sides to a question, one must review all the facts before drawing a conclusion.

In preparing a report, one must not let his personal interest influence his conclusion. Suppose that a student committee were asked to get evidence and to make a report on the question of whether or not fraternity and sorority houses are located too far from the campus. Suppose also that some members of the committee belonged to groups whose residences were at the extreme edge of town. There would be danger that these students, if they were attached to their college homes, would minimize the inconvenience and loss of time which the location involved. On the other hand, those students who lived in houses close to the campus would tend to exaggerate both the advantages of a central location and the disadvantages of a suburban location. Report writing demands not only honesty in the usual sense, but also that one be severely critical of himself. Of course we must admit that however fine one's taste, and accurate one's perception, and broad and deep one's interests, the taste, perception, and degree and quality of interest of every other person dif-

fer from one's own. One's task in reporting, therefore, in addition to its being a problem in accuracy and impartiality, is a task in adaptation.

The Aim: One Must See the Problem.—Many a report, many a research paper is of slight value because the investigator did not see the real problem. He may have collected a mass of facts and figures, but the meaning behind those facts, their implications, remained obscure to the investigator. A sarcastic critic recently had this to say about a supposedly scientific treatise: "Students will benefit enormously from its perusal if they regard it as an illustration of what happens when inability to see a problem is accompanied by a deficient sense of method and no honest effort toward analysis or criticism." [1] According to this writer, the requisites for making a report are an honest analysis of the facts; ability to see the problem raised by those facts; a methodical and systematic procedure.

Getting the Facts.—Facts are gathered from observation of physical phenomena, as in an experiment in chemistry, from people, or from books and other printed matter. Not much can be said about observation: one learns by doing. One's eyes and ears are sharpened by use. An experienced investigator can be of great service, of course, in teaching the novice what to look for. On the geology field-trip the instructor, because of his training, knows what to look for, and his help is invaluable. The experienced worker in every field has an immense advantage over the blundering beginner. But one must be willing to begin at the bottom. Of interviewing and library research no more need be said here, as these subjects have been treated in Chapters VIII and X.

The Book Report.—Of the several kinds of report described at the beginning of this chapter, there are three which we shall consider in detail: the Book Report, the Library Research Report, and the Investigation Report.

[1] *The Saturday Review of Literature,* July 7, 1928, p. 1016.

The Book Report is related to the review and to criticism. Like the printed review of a new book, the Book Report gives an analysis of the content; like critical writing, there is in it some attempt at evaluation. But the Book Report is primarily concerned with the content of a book, and unlike the printed review, the Book Report does not limit itself to the newly published book. The review, moreover, is written for a large number of readers with varied interests; the Book Report, for and to a small group with similar interests.

The Book Report aims to give to a certain group, such as a class or a club, a clear idea of the content of a certain book which, though it may not actually be new, is new and valuable to that group. Whether one is reporting to a group on the latest book of Oriental travel or on Hakluyt's *Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation,* his aim should be to include in his report everything in the book which is novel and valuable to that group. In reporting on a scientific book, or on any volume or article of an expository nature, one must be able to analyze the content and to present in coherent and systematic form the parts which are of greatest value. In determining what is of value, the aims and interests of the group to which the report is presented must of course be kept in mind.

There is no single and absolutely correct plan for making a report. As in all writing or speaking, the good piece of work must be personal. Each task is unique, with requirements of its own. However, method is absolutely necessary. To assist the student in developing a sense of method, and to help him in making a systematic analysis, the following outlines are given. They are intended to be suggestive, rather than to be followed exactly, and should in every case be adapted to the book upon which the report is to be made.

FOR THE SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE OR BOOK

1. What is the thesis (aim or purpose) of the article or book?
2. What are the main divisions of thought by which the thesis is made clear?
3. Of what nature is the evidence?
4. What qualifications had the author for his task?
5. How well does he achieve his purpose?
6. What expository methods are evident?
    a. Clear definition
    b. Analysis of the subject under investigation
    c. Use of illustrative material, analogy, etc.
    d. Use of visual aids

FOR THE SHORT STORY OR NOVEL

1. A statement in as concise a form as possible of what the story is about (which often amounts to a statement of the theme). Thus, "*Markheim* is a psychological story showing the conflict between the good and bad selves of a man who has just committed a murder."
2. A synopsis of the story.
3. The characters—are they types or individuals? Are they consistently and convincingly developed?
4. The setting—is it unusual or of special interest? Is there "local color"? Is there an "atmospheric" effect?
5. The central idea—is there a special thesis or theme unfolded by means of the story? Does the thesis or theme get in the way of the story?
6. Is the story chiefly valuable for the ideas contained in it, for its truth to life, or for its artistic treatment of material?
7. The special qualifications of the author for writing

this kind of story. What skill has he as a story-teller? Does he know the life he is presenting?

8. Points of style worth comment. Illustrate with quotations.
9. A general estimate of the story.

FOR THE VOLUME OF POETRY

1. What are the outstanding subjects or themes?
2. What is the tone of the poems?
3. What is the poet's attitude toward life?
4. What facts in his parentage, environment, or experience helped to determine his attitude?
5. Wherein lies his special gift? What sort of thing does he do best? Illustrate.
6. What are his weaknesses? Illustrate.
7. What is your general estimate of this poet? Can he sing? Is his appeal to the emotions or to the intellect?
8. What can you tell about his technique? Does he write in regular verse? If so, what are his favorite verse and stanzaic forms? Of what character are his rhymes? Does he use free verse forms? If so, what are they like? Is his vocabulary unusual? Is he successful?

FOR THE BOOK OF TRAVEL

1. Determine the writer's purpose: entertainment, instruction, or both.
2. Give as adequate an idea as possible of the region covered: its geography, products, people and their culture.
3. Explain the special uniqueness which the writer found in the region with which the book deals.
4. Explain what is noteworthy in the author's method of presentation. Illustrate.

One making a report orally must remember that thought divisions should be made apparent to the listeners; that transitions must be clearly made; that difficult ideas need to be made clear by repetition and illustration; that good introductions and summaries help the listener to get a bird's-eye view of the whole subject. In the written report it is often advisable to indicate main divisions by the use of subheads.

The Report Based on Library Research.—The Research Report includes everything from a semester thesis in a freshman course in English or rhetoric to the Ph.D. dissertation and the learned papers published in scientific and philological journals. In all cases one's first task is to map out a piece of work which can be well done in the space and time available. One should in every case concentrate his efforts upon the solution of a specific problem. Accumulating odd bits of information from a broad field of knowledge is unprofitable and pointless.

The preliminary steps in the making of a Research Report are as follows:

1. A tentative selection of the question to be investigated or the thesis to be proved
2. The making of an extensive bibliography (See Chapter X.)
3. Wide reading, and the making of systematic notes, preferably on separate cards
4. The final statement of the problem

One begins with a *tentative* statement of the problem or thesis, because he cannot tell until after considerable reading whether the problem as he first stated it is worth further work. It may be too large and complex to be treated in anything less than a volume of several hundred pages. There may be so little material available that not even a brief essay can be made out of it. The material may be of such uniform nature, and all points may be so well authenticated, that nothing remains to be investigated.

However, if the subject is arbitrarily assigned by an instructor, the student has no choice but to go ahead with the research. He must then rely on the judgment of the teacher as to the fitness of the subject. In class work, of course, a paper is often acceptable even when it makes no new contribution, except that of indicating a lively mind. The instructor may know in advance that there are no controversial points, and he may therefore expect merely a systematic survey and *résumé* of a complex mass of data.

But the research paper usually does offer some opportunity for original thinking. Evidence is frequently conflicting, or of such nature that it needs interpretation. That is why the "last word" has been said about so few things. The questions awaiting the research student are therefore many.

When one comes to the actual composition of the Research Report, the steps which he must go through are as follows:

1. A review of the most significant work done by others in the field
2. A review of the problems still remaining
3. A statement of the problems selected for solution in the proposed paper
4. A division of the whole problem into parts of a size convenient for treatment
5. A presentation of the material so arranged as to dispose of the parts of the question one by one
6. An answer to any objections that might be raised by a reader of the paper
7. A summary or other suitable conclusion
8. A complete bibliography

If the thesis is long, a table of contents may be useful to the reader. Footnotes should be used to show the exact source of all borrowed material, and for comments, long quotations, and evidence which, if put into the body

of the paper, would interrupt the flow of the central theme or argument.

The Investigation Report.—The Investigation Report may be a simple one-page record of a routine laboratory experiment in an elementary science course, or it may be a carefully planned account of a highly original investigation. For the courses in the laboratory sciences, the instructors usually have a stipulated form, sometimes requiring all students to use paper designed to fit the needs of the course. Generally, however, a plan such as the following, varied to suit the particular problem, will be found useful:

1. A statement of the purpose or object of the investigation or experiment
2. An explanation of the technical theory or formulas involved, with necessary definitions of terms
3. A description of any apparatus or special equipment used
4. An explanation of the method of procedure
5. A detailed record of the results, including any tabulations, charts, or graphs
6. An interpretation of the results
7. A statement of a remedy or a prediction as to future developments. (Necessary only in special cases)

If the problem is of a highly technical nature, one must keep in mind the kind of reader for whom the report is being made. If it is to be read only by persons trained in the same field, technical terms may, of course, be used more freely than if it is intended for a general audience. To make a technical subject intelligible to the average reader is a great test of skill. Accuracy and clarity are the greatest virtues in report writing; brevity is next in importance.

The Forms of Discourse in Report Writing.—Reports are primarily expository. Their purpose is to give information in a form which is easy to understand. Reports

present facts, explain their relation to each other, and offer interpretations when the data are not verifiable. On the basis of the facts they sometimes offer criticisms which will lead to the increase of knowledge or to improved conditions. Reports require not only the assembling of data, but the most careful analysis, resulting in logical division or classification. The writer must be able to define his terms so clearly that there will be no ambiguities.

Scientific investigators must learn to describe minutely and accurately the phenomena they observe: geological formations, soils, housing conditions, and many other things. Apparatus used in experiments, mechanical appliances, and machines must often be described so that they can be visualized by the reader. These descriptions are scientific, not literary, and are expository in purpose, but they require the writer to be familiar with the principles of description. Synopses of stories, processes, and methods of procedure are all types of simple narrative, and all are tests of the writer's ability to recount clearly and briefly facts or events in time sequence.

In some reports the principles of argumentation are required. Evidence has to be evaluated, for all data are not of equal value. The line of reasoning by which one reaches a conclusion must contain no fallacy. If we are making use of the work of another, we must be able to detect possible errors in the evidence or in the use of the evidence. We must make a final check, much as does the debater, to see that no vulnerable places have been left unguarded, that no essential point has been omitted.

The Use of Visual Aids.—Pictures, maps, graphs, and tables are useful in many types of writing. Much of the value of history books would be lost if the pictures of costume, of styles of architecture, if the plans of fortifications, maps showing the routes taken by explorers and conquering armies were omitted. Science manuals and guide books for tourists profit alike by the use of charts, ground-

plans, tables, and other visual aids. Whenever it is possible, the report writer should use these aids to help the reader visualize a structure, or to get a quick comprehension of statistics. Below are listed the common uses of the various types of visual aids:

Pictures: Valuable to show historical costume, architectural types, archæological discoveries, fauna and flora, geological formations, inventions, machines.

Diagrams: Floor plans of churches, galleries, ruins; geological formations, machines, genealogies, apparatus.

Maps: To show distribution of crops, population, political divisions, rainfall, trade routes, routes of explorers and of armies, city expansion.

Graphs and tabulations: In general to assist the reader to a quick comprehension of masses of figures. They may also show comparisons, growth, and distribution.

Study of the following typical examples will give one a fair idea of the uses which are made of visual aids. The table printed below tells one at a glance the number of hours which persons of a given school-age should sleep, and the preferred hours for sleeping.[1]

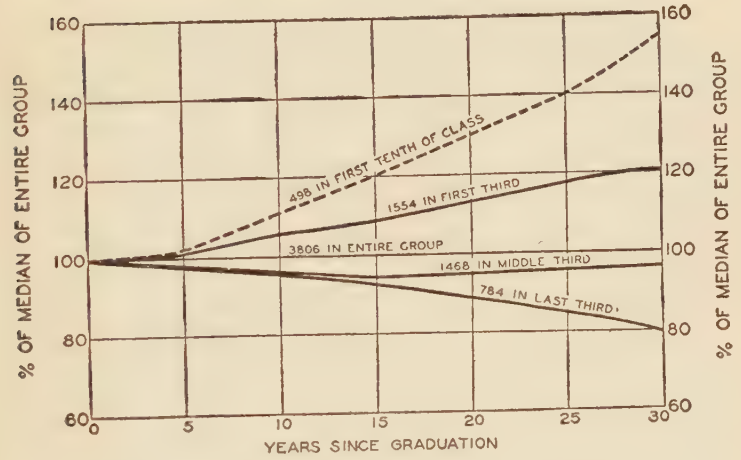
SLEEPING SCHEDULE

(Arranged for schools by the late Dr. Clement Dukes, of Rugby)

	Number of hours for sleep	*Time preferred*
All under 6 years	13	6 P.M. to 7 A.M.
Between 6 and 7 years	12.5	6.30 " " 7 "
" 7 " 8 "	12	7 " " 7 "
" 8 " 9 "	11.5	7.30 " " 7 "
" 9 " 10 "	11	8 " " 7 "
" 10 " 13 "	10.5	8.30 " " 7 "
" 13 " 15 "	10	9 " " 7 "
" 15 " 17 "	9.5	9.30 " " 7 "
" 17 " 19 "	9	10 " " 7 "

[1] D. F. Fraser-Harris, "Sleep," *The Forum*, June, 1928.

From the graph below we learn what the relationship between salary and college grades has been for a number of men whose cases have been studied.[1]



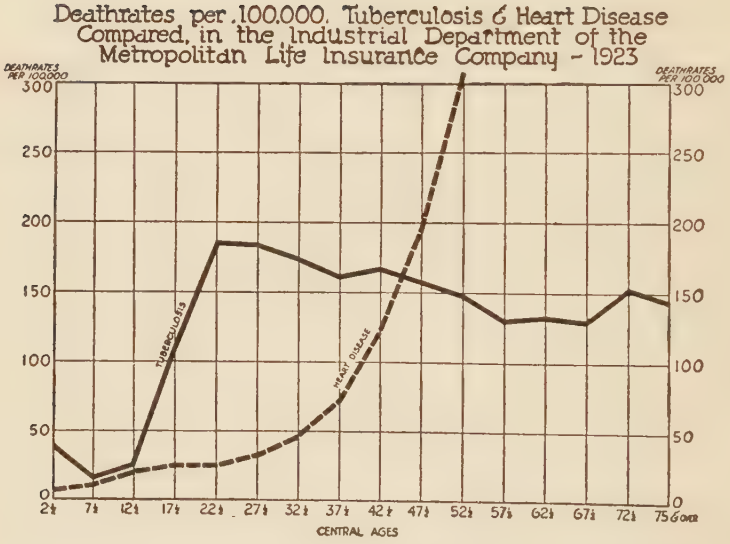
I—Median Salaries by College Scholarship Rank

The median salary of the entire group studied is shown by the horizontal 100% line. Thirty years after graduation, the median salary of the men in the first tenth of their college classes is 155%, that of the men in the lowest third of their classes is 79% of this median.

The following graph shows the comparative deathrate from tuberculosis and heart disease for persons between the age of two and a half years and the age of seventy-five.[2]

[1] Walter S. Gifford, "Does Business Want Scholars?" *Harper's*, May, 1928.

[2] Louis I. Dublin, "The Problem of Heart Disease," *Harper's*, January, 1927.



The following shows the advantage of presenting statistical data in the minimum of space. Note the ease with which comparisons can be made.[1]

[1] *World Almanac*, 1927.

CASUALTIES OF ALL BELLIGERENTS IN THE WORLD WAR

(Compiled by the United States War Department and checked up on Feb. 25, 1924

	Total Mobilized Forces	Killed and Died	Wounded Casualties	Prisoners and Missing	Total Casualties	Per Cent
ALLIES	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	*Number*	
Russia	12,000,000	1,700,000	4,950,000	2,500,000	9,150,000	76.3
France	8,410,000	1,363,000	4,266,000	537,000	6,160,800	73.3
British Empire	8,904,467	908,371	2,090,212	191,652	3,190,235	35.8
Italy	5,615,000	650,000	947,000	600,000	2,197,000	39.1
United States	4,355,000	126,000	234,300	4,500	350,300	8.0
Japan	800,000	300	907	3	1,210	.2
Roumania	750,000	335,706	120,000	80,000	535,706	71.4
Serbia	707,343	45,000	133,148	152,958	331,106	46.8
Belgium	267,000	13,716	44,686	34,659	93,061	34.9
Greece	230,000	5,000	21,000	1,000	27,000	11.7
Portugal	100,000	7,222	13,751	12,318	33,291	33.3
Montenegro	50,000	3,000	10,000	7,000	20,000	40.0
Total	42,188,810	5,157,315	12,831,004	4,121,090	22,094,900	52.3
CENTRAL POWERS						
Germany	11,000,000	1,773,700	4,216,058	1,152,000	7,142,558	64.9
Austro-Hungary	7,800,000	1,200,000	3,620,000	2,200,000	7,020,000	90.0
Turkey	2,850,000	325,000	400,000	250,000	975,000	34.2
Bulgaria	1,200,000	87,500	152,390	27,029	266,919	22.2
Total	22,850,000	3,386,200	8,388,448	3,629,829	15,404,477	67.4
Grand total	65,038,810	8,543,515	21,219,452	7,750,919	37,499,386	57.6

"Killed and Died" in the above table includes deaths from all causes. German and French figures are official. Figures for the United States include marines serving with the army. Wounded casualties include, for the United States, those who died of wounds, numbering 14,500.

II

Written Examinations

A student's worst writing is usually done when he should do his best—when he is writing a "bluebook." Aside from failure to know the subject matter, there are three reasons for the poor writing done in examination papers: nervous-

ness, haste, and failure to understand that every written test is *a problem in communication.*

Of the first difficulty we shall say little. Nervousness is a complex condition to which many persons are subject. So far as it is possible, the nervous person should discipline himself in self-control, and, what is more important, he should master the factors which are the cause of his uneasiness. If one knows his subject matter and has fair skill at writing, there is no need to be nervous. Moreover, after one has taken a number of examinations and has passed them with some degree of success, he gains confidence in himself and in his powers. His nervousness will then be no more than the momentary stage fright which is sometimes felt by seasoned actors and public speakers when they first step out on the stage. It will be forgotten while the student reads through the set of questions.

"Make haste slowly," says the adage. Be cool and go systematically to work. Read the entire set of questions through from beginning to end before setting out to write the answer to a single question. Be sure you understand exactly what is asked for. Many failures are due to misreading the questions. Now think through each question, determining what the principal train of ideas in the answer is to be. Be sure that you say enough to convince the instructor that your information is full and accurate. It is equally important that you do not include in your answer to one question ideas which are only slightly relevant to that question, but which may be required in answering a question farther down the page.

While doing this preliminary work, some students may find it profitable to make rough notes on scratch paper. If the usual bluebook is used for the examination, the left-hand pages may be used for these jottings and outlines, the right-hand pages being reserved for the complete answers.

The time available should be budgeted. If there are

five questions to be answered in an hour, take ten minutes for study of the questions; then apportion the remaining time between the questions. In a three-hour examination, take at least twenty minutes for the preliminary work. In a well-planned test the questions should be approximately equal in importance and should require nearly the same time to answer, provided that the student has been consistent in his preparation. Do not waste time by copying the questions into the bluebook. Instead, frame the first sentence of the answer so that it will be apparent what you are setting out to do.

The questions do not need to be answered in the order in which they appear on the printed sheet or blackboard. But naturally, if one answers Number Five first, he must indicate that fact by placing a *V* or *5* in the margin beside his answer. Usually it is well to get out of the way first the questions which seem least difficult. In this manner one may save a little time which he may later put upon the questions which to him seem more difficult. It is poor practice either to sit puzzling for a long time over one of the questions, or to write voluminously in answer to one of the questions upon which one happens to be well informed. Either method will cause one to slight the last questions, and so will result in a poorly balanced bluebook.

Every examination is to the student a problem in communication. His task is not to unload his mind of a lot of lumber which he has crammed into it, but to present facts, ideas, explanations, interpretations, and criticisms in the most lucid and forceful manner possible. No hastily scrawled, almost illegible approximations will do. The student must never assume that the instructor will give him credit for more than he has actually got down on paper. He should never think that his teacher knows him so well and has such a high regard for his attainments that any sort of incoherent jottings will be acceptable. He must get it thoroughly fixed in his mind that his book

will be graded upon its content and that this content will appear to advantage only when it is put into the best form possible; that of two books containing approximately the same facts, one which is well organized, clear, and made interesting and forceful by apt illustration may be worth an "A," while the other, because it is slovenly in form, may be worth only a "C."

The instructor, especially in a two- or three-hour examination, has the right to expect good, clean prose. Ideas are to be expressed in complete sentences and the sentences are to be combined into paragraphs. If the preliminary analysis has been done, thought divisions which naturally express themselves in paragraphs will come without effort.

Mechanical details are worth serious consideration. It is not necessary that one be able to write a beautiful hand, but one should write legibly. Arrange the material on the page so as to give a pleasing appearance. Leave sufficient margins, and if there are tabulations or outlines, space and indent them so that they can be read with the least effort. Punctuate carefully and spell as well as possible. Before turning in the paper, check it over carefully:

Has anything been omitted? Any question? Any part of a question?

Are there any misstatements, any errors as to fact, any lapses in reasoning?

Are there any errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling?

EXERCISES: REPORTS BASED ON READING

1. In the periodical room of your college library you will find posted in some conspicuous place a list of the best magazine articles of the month. Read one of these "best articles" and write a report of it for class.

2. Look over the list of "new accessions" in your library. Read one of the books in the list and make a report upon it.

3. Write a report upon one of the following stories: Mérimée's *Mateo Falcone,* Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* or *The Cask of Amontillado,* Hardy's *The Three Strangers,* Kipling's *The Phantom Rickshaw,* Hawthorne's *The Ambitious Guest* or *Feather Top.* Put the core of the story you have read into one sentence. (Note: "Packed with suggestive power and unknown horror, Leonid Andreyev's *Lazarus* gives a grim answer to what lies beyond the grave." And this: "In Andreyev's *Lazarus* we have the complete portrayal of a man who has felt death, and who has come back, but with the markings of the grave upon him.")

4. Are the works of Bayard Taylor, Lafcadio Hearn, George Gissing, Wilkie Collins, William Henley, or A. E. Housman in your library? Prepare a report upon the works of one, bringing out the points enumerated in the outlines given on the preceding pages. Perhaps the report can be built around one book which is the writer's best, or which is representative.

5. Examine the essays of Macaulay and make a classified report upon the *ways* in which he makes his introductions.

6. Read several essays by Huxley. Study the methods which he uses for making technical or otherwise difficult ideas clear to the common reader. Make a report upon your findings.

EXERCISES: INVESTIGATION REPORTS

1. Question students and library officials as to the reading done by students over the week-ends. Analyze your results. What is their significance? Make a report.

2. Question fifty or more students as to their reading of newspapers. Find out the time spent in newspaper reading, what sort of news is thought most and least interesting? Analyze and interpret your findings.

3. From fifty students and twenty-five members of the faculty get definitions of education. Classify the results. What trends toward humanistic, practical, or other ideas of education are apparent?

4. Keep a record for a week of how you spend your time. Tabulate and interpret the result. Make suggestions for a more efficient program.

5. Interview twenty students. Get from each the names of the courses which he is pursuing, the number of hours spent in studying each subject, and his grades for the preceding semester. Analyze and interpret the results.

6. From the catalogs of other universities in your library make a comparative study of the cost of higher education (in the colleges of letters, arts, and sciences) in the East, Middle West, South, and Far West. Include such items as tuition, board, room, books, and incidentals.

7. Do the same for professional courses.

8. Interview fifty students, twenty-five men and twenty-five women, to find out the sum of money spent by each during the last year for clothes. Find what proportion this bears to the total annual expenditures of the student. Prepare in advance a questionnaire listing all important items. Include such questions as "What factors in college life tend to increase cost? What factors tend to decrease cost? What factors in the prevailing styles tend to increase or decrease cost?" Analyze and tabulate your findings, making appropriate interpretative comment.

9. Make a study of moving-picture titles and advertising. What is the prevailing type of appeal? Is there a noticeable discrepancy between the character of the advertising and the character of the film?

10. Attend churches of various denominations for several consecutive Sundays. Note the character of each sermon, and as nearly as possible estimate the student attendance. Is there an apparent relation between the subject of the sermon and the student interest? Make a report.

PART FOUR

Handbook

Contents of Handbook

GRAMMAR
(*page 763*)

PUNCTUATION
(*page 789*)

MISCELLANEOUS
(*page 798*)

GLOSSARY OF FAULTY EXPRESSIONS AND MISUSED TERMS
(*page 819*)

I. GRAMMAR

G 1. NOUN.

A noun is the name of a person, place, or thing. A noun may be (1) common—the name of a member of a class or kind: *boy, city, plant.* (2) A noun may be a special or individual name: *Charles, Chicago, Bellis perennis.*

Nouns have three genders:

The name of a male object is said to be in the *masculine gender: man.*

The name of a female object is said to be in the *feminine gender: woman.*

The name of a sexless object is said to be in the *neuter gender: street.*

A noun like *student,* which may be either masculine or feminine, is said to be in the *common gender. Chairman* may be either masculine or feminine.

Some nouns have masculine and feminine forms, distinguished by a suffix or prefix:

Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
actor	actress	host	hostess
benefactor	benefactress	janitor	janitress
bridegroom (or groom)	bride	lad	lass
count	countess	marquis	marchioness
duke	duchess	poet	poetess
executor	executrix	prince	princess
heir	heiress	salesman	saleswoman
hero	heroine	waiter	waitress

A *collective* noun is one which, though singular in form, indicates a number of persons or things: *committee, cabinet* (the president's), *council, group,* the *class* of '98. It is an error to suppose that collective nouns always take a singular verb. When an idea

of plurality is in the mind of the writer, it is customary to use a plural verb: thus, The team *were* unable to agree upon their plays. But when the collection is thought of as a unit the singular verb is used: thus, The team *is* playing out of town today. Other examples:

The whole *race* of man *proclaim* it lawful to drink wine. (De Quincey)

As the *clergy are* not what they ought to be . . . (Jane Austen)[1]

For the formation of the plural of nouns see *Plurals,* in Part III of the Handbook.

For further information, see *Case.*

G 2. PRONOUN.

A pronoun is a word used in place of a noun. The word to which a pronoun refers is called its *antecedent.*

Pronouns may be classified as follows:

Personal: *I, you, he, she, it* (called personal pronouns because they change in form for person).
Possessive: *mine, his, hers, yours, its.*
Indefinite: *each, either, neither, one, none.*
Demonstrative: *this, that,* of which the plural forms are *these, those.*
Relative: *who, which, that.*
Interrogative: *who, which, what.*
Reflexive: *myself, himself* (I cut *myself*).
Intensive: *myself, himself* (I did it *myself*).
Identifying: *the same* (*The same* is true in every case. Colloquial).
Reciprocal: *each other, one another.*

The personal pronoun changes in form to indicate person, number, and case, and in the third person (he, she, it) for gender.

The indefinite pronoun is sometimes inflected in the genitive: *one's* advantage.

The relative pronoun *who* changes in form for case:

[1] Examples quoted from JESPERSEN, *Growth and Structure of the English Language,* p. 14, Teubner, Leipzig, 1919.

Nominative: *who*
Objective: *whom*
Genitive: *whose*
For further information, see *Case*.

G 3. CASE.

Case indicates the relationship of a noun or pronoun to other words in the context in which it appears. In a highly inflected language the changes to show case are many, but in English (with the exception of the pronouns) there are no changes except for the genitive. In a sentence such as *The dog bit the boy,* we have nothing to tell us who is the actor and who is acted upon, except the position of the substantives in the sentence. Pronouns, however, are still inflected throughout for case. (See *Pronoun.*)

The rules for case are as follows:

1. The subject of a verb is in the nominative case:

   Dr. Malmgren froze to death.

2. The object of a verb is in the objective case:

   The woodman felled the *tree.*

   When using compound objects one or more of which is pronominal, be sure to use the objective form:

   Right: He appointed John and *me.*

3. The substantive after a linking verb (copula) is in the nominative case and hence is called the predicate nominative:

   It is *I*;[1]

   or it may be in the genitive case, as in

   It is *mine.*

4. The substantive used with a preposition is in the objective case:

[1] Although, in colloquial use especially, "It is *me*" seems to be gaining ground, and many grammarians are either frankly favoring, or predicting, its general acceptance.

I spoke to *him.*
With *whom* are you going? (*Whom* are you going with?)

When compound pronominal objects of prepositions are used both or all the objects must be in the objective form:

The game is now between you and *me.*
The responsibility fell upon her and *me.*
Like John and *me,* he is tired.

5. The subject of an infinitive is in the objective case:

I asked *him* to go at once.
They believe *me* to be mad.

6. The substantive following the infinitive (*i.e.,* its object) is in the objective case:

I believe the best man to be *him.*

7. The verb of the clause in which a substantive appears governs its case:

I gave the prize to the man *who* I thought *was best qualified.*

8. An appositive is in the same case as the substantive with which it is in apposition:

He picked the tallest men: John and me.
The tallest men, John and I, will be selected.

9. The genitive, or possessive, case shows possession or ownership, indicated by the addition of the apostrophe or the apostrophe and *s*:

This is a *man's* job.

Since nouns vary in the formation of their plurals, the formation of the plural genitive also varies.

Singular Forms	Plural Forms
a boy's room	boys' hats
a woman's parasol	women's fashions
a man's job	men's clothes
a deer's tracks	deer's tracks
Smith's automobile	the Smiths' party
Jones's dog	the Joneses' children

The genitive may also be indicated by the use of the prepositional phrase: the poetry of *Keats*.

Inanimate objects do not have an inflection for the genitive case:

Wrong: The house's roof.
Right: The roof of the house.

There are a few exceptions, established by long use, such as:

A day's work.
A week's wages.
The season's greetings.

G 4. "IT" AND "THERE" AS EXPLETIVES.

The indefinite *it* and *there* may be used in statements of general truth or application.

It never rains but it pours.
Roughing it.
There were several books on the table.

Often the indefinite *it* weakens the sentence by making it longer and by throwing the important idea into an inconspicuous place:

With so much going on *it* was hard for him to keep at his books.
Better: With so much going on *he* found it difficult to keep at his books.

Avoid the "it says" construction common among young students:

Bad: It says on page forty that Braddock was a brave soldier.
Better: On page forty the author says, etc.

The use of *there* as an introductory word is usually less objectionable, but its use sometimes weakens the sentence. Compare:

There was a heavy fall of rain last night.
Much rain fell last night.

Often the indefinite use of *there* appears like a tautology. "There were many there," is less satisfactory than, "Many were there."

G 5. VERBS: KINDS AND TENSES.

A verb is a word used to assert or to express action.

Verbs are inflected to show tense or time, person, number, voice (*q.v.*), and mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive).

Verbs are *transitive* if they require an object to complete them: "Who *steals* my purse *steals* trash." Otherwise they are intransitive: "Do not *talk* aloud." After every verb, dictionaries indicate whether it is transitive or intransitive, or both, by the use of the proper abbreviation: *v.t.* or *v.i.*

Verbs are said to be *regular* when they form the past tense by adding *ed, d,* or *t.*

Present	Past
I talk	I talked
You talk	You talked
He talks	He talked

The *principal parts* of a verb are the *present tense, past tense* and the *past participle.*

Present	Past	Past Participle
talk	talked	talked

If we know these basic forms, and the present participle (formed in *ing, talking,*) we can conjugate the verb.

The *irregular verbs* are those that form the past tense by internal vowel change. The principal parts of the commonly used irregular verbs are given below:

Present Tense	Past Tense	Past Participle
awake	awoke, awaked	awaked
be, am	was	been
bear	bore	borne, bore
beat	beat	beaten
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bid (command)	bade	bidden
bid (as at auction)	bid	bid
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
burst	burst	burst
choose	chose	chosen

Present Tense	Past Tense	Past Participle
come	came	come
dive	dived	dived
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
flee	fled	fled
fly	flew	flown
forget	forgot	forgotten
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung, hanged [1]	hung, hanged
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
lend	lent	lent
lie	lay	lain
pay	paid	paid
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
set	set	set
shake	shook	shaken
shine	shone	shone
shoe	shod	shod
shrink	shrank	shrunk
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat
smite	smote	smitten
sneak	sneaked	sneaked

[1] *Hung,* except in speaking of an execution: thus, "Three murderers were to be *hanged* that day."

Present Tense	Past Tense	Past Participle
speak	spoke	spoken
spring	sprang	sprung
stride	strode	stridden
swim	swam	swum
take	took	taken
throw	threw	thrown
tread	trod	trodden
wet	wet	wet
write	wrote	written

The *present* tense, the *past* tense, and the *future* tense are the *simple* tenses:

I *see* the words.
I *saw* the words.
I *shall see* the words when I put on my glasses.

If we wish to indicate that an action has been completed at a certain time, we use a form of the *perfect* tense.

The *present perfect* tense indicates that an action has been completed before the present time. It is made up of an auxiliary verb in the present tense plus the past participle of the basic verb: "I *have seen* the words."

The *past perfect* tense indicates that an action was completed before a certain time in the past. It is made up of the past tense of an auxiliary verb plus the past participle of the principal verb: "I *had seen* the words."

The *future perfect* tense indicates that an action will be completed before a certain time in the future. It is made up of a future form of an auxiliary verb or verbs plus the past participle of the main verb: "I *shall have seen* the words by tomorrow."

The *progressive* form of the verb represents the action as continuing or going on at the time indicated by the tense. Below is a comparison of the ordinary and progressive forms:

Present: I talk	I am talking
Past: I talked	I was talking
Future: I shall talk	I shall be talking
Present perfect: I have talked	I have been talking
Past perfect: I had talked	I had been talking
Future perfect: I shall have talked	I shall have been talking

A *copulative* or *linking* verb is one which expresses no action, its function being merely to serve as the connecting link between the subject and the predicative adjective or predicate noun:

Eva *was* happy.
The president *is* always a native citizen.

The copulative verb is usually some form of the infinitive *to be,* but occasionally such words as *appear, become, look, seem,* etc., are used as copulas: "He *looked* every inch a king."

Auxiliary verbs, as the name signifies, are helping verbs. The forms of *be, have, do, will, shall, may* and *can* are the common auxiliaries. Auxiliaries are needed to make up the future, the perfect, and the progressive forms of verbs. The main verb with its auxiliaries makes up a *verb phrase.*

G 6. VOICE.

A verb in the active voice represents the subject as doing or being. A verb in the passive voice represents the subject as receiving the action. Note the inversion of subject and object:

Active: Ruth made six home runs.
Passive: Six home runs were made by Ruth.

Unless the doer of the act is of less importance than the receiver, the active voice should be used. In the sentences above, Ruth is stressed in the first; the number of home runs is stressed in the second. Generally the passive voice is weaker than the active, and should therefore be used with care.

The verb in the passive voice is made up of a form of the infinitive *to be,* and the past participle of the main verb. The six tenses, three simple and three perfect, in the passive voice are as follows:

Present: Six runs are made.
Past: Six runs were made.
Future: Six runs will be made.
Present perfect: Six runs have been made.
Past perfect: Six runs had been made.
Future perfect: Six runs will have been made.

G 7. MOOD is the property of a verb which indicates the state of mind in which a predication is made. Theoretically at least there are three moods: Indicative, Imperative, and Subjunctive.

The *indicative* mood is used to indicate positive statements of truth; its spirit is that of truth or common reality. Naturally most of our speaking and writing is in the indicative mood: "It rained." "The show was dull."

Questions are also in the indicative mood because the answer will be a positive statement.

The *imperative* mood is used to express a command or entreaty. Since commands are spoken directly to some one, the subject is always in the second person, singular or plural, and the verb is in its simplest form. The subject pronoun is usually omitted: "Sit down."

Sometimes the auxiliary *do* is used for emphasis: "Do sit down."

The *subjunctive* mood is supposed to indicate wish, exhortation, doubt, concession, anticipation, and condition contrary to fact. In general, the subjunctive is now disregarded except in certain uses of the verbs *to be,* and *to have.* Poetic forms, old prose, and the King James' version of the Bible still keep us familiar with such forms as:

If this *be* treason, etc.
Except ye *be* as little children, etc.
Though he *slay* me, yet will I trust him.

In contemporary usage even such instances as the following seem rather formal:

I must act lest I *be* thought afraid.
Were you going, I should go too.
If he *were* my friend, I should try to help him.
If he *go* now, he may go again tomorrow.

The subjunctive form is recommended in a few constructions such as:

I wish I *were* going.
She looked as if she *were* ready to cry.
If I *were* you, I should not go.

G 8. INFINITIVE, INFINITIVE PHRASES AND CLAUSES.

The infinitive is the basic form of the verb. It is not inflected to indicate person or number and is usually preceded by the particle *to*.

It is better *to wear* out than *to rust* out.

The infinitive with its objects or modifiers is called an infinitive phrase. The phrase as a whole may be used as an adjective, an adverb, or a substantive.

Adjective: This is the moment *to decide*.
Adverb: He stopped *to mend* a tire.
Substantive: He tried *to stop* the car.

When the infinitive is used with a subject we have an infinitive clause.

I asked him *to stop* the car.

The indirect object *him* is also the subject of the infinitive *to stop*, and the whole infinitive clause is the object of the transitive verb *asked*.

The subject of an infinitive is in the objective case.

The infinitive clause may also be used as the object of a preposition:

I waited for him to stop the car.

The infinitive sign *to* is often employed elliptically for the infinitive, as "He preferred not to." Also, the infinitive may be used without the sign *to*, as "I bade him listen."

The split infinitive (that is, the separation of the particle *to* from the verb proper) is frowned upon by some careful writers. However, no rule should be made about splitting infinitives which does not take into consideration the effect. In other words, do whatever is necessary to get the right effect, but avoid awkwardness.

Awkward: He promised *to* never again *interfere* in my affairs.
Much better: He promised never again *to interfere* in my affairs.

Careful writers occasionally split the infinitive when the insertion of the modifier seems to give a better effect:

. . . without permitting himself to actually mention the name. (Matthew Arnold)

. . . things which few except parents can be expected to really understand. (O. W. Holmes)

. . . of a kind to directly stimulate curiosity. (Walter Pater)[1]

If the adverb is put before the infinitive an ambiguity may result. Note that these two sentences may not mean the same thing:

He failed completely to reassure me.
He failed to completely reassure me.

In the first we do not know but that *completely* modifies *failed.*

G 9. GERUND AND GERUND PHRASES.

The gerund is a verbal noun. Like the present participle it ends in *ing,* but while the participle is a verbal adjective, the gerund partakes of the nature of verb and noun.

Reading without *thinking* is the death of the mind.

Reading, while implying action, is the subject of *is. Thinking,* also a gerund, is the object of the preposition *without.*

Gerunds are also used as predicate nominatives:

Eating is *digging* one's grave with one's teeth.

The gerund *digging* here shows its verbal nature by having a direct object, *grave.* The gerund and its object form a gerund phrase.

Gerunds may also be direct objects of the modal forms of the verb:

I dislike *talking* during the concert.

Talking is the object of *dislike.*

Gerund phrases are formed in a number of ways. A common form is the phrase made up of a preposition with the gerund as its object:

One can learn *by observing* the mistakes of others.

The phrase *by observing* has the use of an adverb of manner.

[1] These examples are quoted from CURME, *College English Grammar,* p. 300, Johnson Publishing Co., 1925.

Gerunds cause most trouble when they are at the beginning of a sentence. See *Dangling Construction.*

G 10. PARTICIPLE AND PARTICIPIAL PHRASES.

A form of the verb, not inflected for person and number, which also partakes of the nature of an adjective:

Believing that the ship had been struck, he donned his life-preserver.

Believing, while a verbal form, also modifies *he,* the subject of the main clause.

Care must be taken to avoid dangling participial phrases. See *Dangling Construction.*

The participle may be *present,* as in the example given above, or *past*:

Discouraged by weeks of fog, he gave up the projected flight.

There is also a phrasal form, made up of a present participle and a past participle:

Feeling discouraged, he abandoned the project.

G 11. SHALL AND WILL.

1. To express simple future, use *shall* with the first person and *will* with the second and third:

I shall go
You will go
He will go

We shall go
You will go
They will go

2. To express the speaker's intention, determination, threat, promise, obligation, prophecy, etc., use *will* in the first person, *shall* in the second and third:

I (we) will go (I intend, I am determined to go).
You shall go (you must go).
He (they) shall go (he must go).

3. If the willingness or intention is expressed by another word in the second and third:

I shall be happy to help you on Friday.
I should like to go to the beach.

4. In questions use the form expected in the answer:

Shall we go? (We shall.)
Shall you go? (I shall go.)
Will you go? (I will, *i.e.,* I intend to go.)
Shall he go? (He shall, *i.e.,* he must go.)
Will he go? (He will go—simple future.)[1]

5. In indirect discourse use the same auxiliary used in direct discourse, using *should* and *would* when the tense demands it.

I think that I shall go. (Simple future)
I declare that I will not go. (Determination)
You say that you will not go. (Simple future)
He says that you shall not go. (Determination)
He says that he will go. (Simple future)
He says that she shall go. (Determination)

I said that I should go. (Past tense *said* requires *should* instead of shall.) (Simple future)
I said that I would go. (Intention, determination)
John said that she would go. (Simple future)
Her father said that she should go. (Determination or promise)

6. From the examples above, it is apparent that *should* and *would* generally follow the rules for *shall* and *will*. However, *should* is used for *all* persons in subordinate clauses of condition or purpose, or in main clauses that express a promise contingent upon a subordinate clause:

If he (she, you, they) *should* come back, I should be glad to see him.
If I could have my wish, he (she, you, them) *should* go free.
He wished that nothing *should* stand in the way.

G 12. ADJECTIVE.

An adjective is a part of speech used to modify (describe or limit) a substantive. After certain verbs called linking or copulative we use adjectives describing the subject of the clause:

[1] This is at present a much disputed usage, but it is supported by such grammarians as KITTREDGE and FARLEY, *Advanced English Grammar,* Ginn and Company, pp. 103, 104, and CURME, *College English Grammar,* p. 288.

Right: She is (seems, appears, looks, etc.) *beautiful.*

After verbs which show action an adverb is required.

Right: She sings *beautifully.*

Avoid ambiguous uses of *good* and *bad*:

Poor: You look *good* (or *bad*) this morning.
Poor: I feel *good* this morning.
Better: You look *well* (or *rested,* or *fresh,* or *tired,* or *ill*).

For the method of comparison of adjectives, see *Comparison.*

A *proper* adjective is an adjective made from a proper noun. Rome, France, Shakespeare, are proper nouns, and are consequently capitalized. The adjectives made from them are likewise capitalized: *Roman* law, *French* pastry, *Shakespearean* drama, *Oriental* music.

Certain adjectives have become so established that we have ceased to think of them as derived from proper nouns. Thus we write, *china* dishes, *macadam* roads, *mackintosh* coat, *voltaic* battery, *galvanized* wire.

G 13. PRONOMINAL ADJECTIVES.

Certain words, ordinarily pronouns, are often used as adjectives, and hence are called *pronominal adjectives.* The following are common examples:

The *genitive* form of the *personal* pronoun: "I lost my mashie." *My* as a modifier of *mashie* has the use of an adjective.

The *relative* pronoun may be used as a pronominal adjective: "The man *whose* mashie was lost should report to the caddy house." *Whose* functions both as relative pronoun and as a modifier of *mashie.*

Interrogative pronoun: "*What* club shall I use for this shot?" The demonstrative *what* is also an adjective modifying *club.*

Demonstrative pronoun: "I made *that* hole in four strokes."

Indefinite pronoun: "The *other* course is easier to play."

G 14. ARTICLE.

The limiting adjectives *a, an,* and *the* are called *articles. A* and *an* are called *indefinite* articles, and *the* is called the *definite* article.

The definite article is the weakened form of the demonstrative adjective *that,* and, like the demonstrative adjective, it is used to point out or call attention to a particular person or thing. The person or thing preceded by the definite article may or may not be further particularized by a descriptive phrase.

The indefinite articles are used when there is no intention or no need to point out a particular person or thing. Compare the following:

We stopped at *the* house on *the* hill west of town.
We stopped at *a* house on *a* hill west of town.

In the first sentence there is the attempt to convey the idea that there is but one hill west of town, and but one house on the hill. In the second sentence the identification of the house is only partially made, for, judging by the statement made, there may have been more than one hill, and there may have been several houses on each hill.

Often the modifier after the noun is omitted because unnecessary: "I shall enter the University in September." Compare: "I shall enter a university in September."

The definite article is sometimes used to distinguish a particular class from other classes or from the masses:

The king can do no wrong.
The fish is *a* vertebrate animal living wholly in the water.

Idiom sometimes requires the use and sometimes the omission of the definite article:

He was on his way to church.
He was on his way to the church.

The first sentence indicates that the man was going to attend church service; the second indicates that he was on his way toward the church building.

G 15. ADVERB.

An adverb is a word modifying a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Adverbs express:

Time: I arrived *yesterday.*
Place: The corner post was *here.*

Manner: You sing *well.*
Degree: You sing *very* well.
Negation: You do *not* sing well.

There are also interrogative adverbs:

When are you coming?

and relative (or conjunctive) adverbs:

You may go *where* you like.

Adverbs usually end in *ly*; some adverbs, such as *wrong,* have two forms: *wrong, wrongly; cheap, cheaply.* Adjectives and adverbs are sometimes alike in form: thus *wrong* and *cheap* may be either adjective or adverb; *ill* is another, the adverbial form, *illy,* being rarely used.

Never use the suffix *ly* after *thus, much, straight, fast,* or *first.*[1]

Slow, in the familiar sign, "Drive Slow," is not incorrect, *slow* is an adverb as well as an adjective; but *slowly* is the more literary form.

For comparison of adverbs, see *Comparison.*

The position of the adverb with reference to the verb is important. Incorrect position of such adverbs as *only* obscures the intention of the sentence. We frequently hear such statements as, "I only had a dollar." The speaker will probably put the stress on the verb *had,* and this stress will make his meaning clear. What he means is, "I had only a dollar." "I only had a dollar," really means, "Only I had a dollar."

Even in the last two statements there is a difference in meaning due to the position of *only.* The initial position or the end position of any word serves to make it prominent and hence gives to it greater stress. Note the different shades of meaning in the following:

I *vaguely* remember the visit.
I remember the visit *vaguely.*

[1] For a discussion of adverbs ending in *ly,* see FOWLER, *A Dictionary of Modern Usage,* under *ly* and *Unidiomatic -ly.*

I had *never* thought of such a thing.
Never had I thought of such a thing.

With the infinitive form of the verb, older usage favored placing the adverb either before or after the infinitive, but not between the particle *to* and the verb proper. Recent usage recognizes that there are times when splitting the infinitive may give the meaning more accurately or more quickly: "He planned to utterly destroy my reputation." If we place *utterly* before the particle *to* there is danger that the reader may attach to it the verb *planned;* if we hold the adverb until the end of the sentence the full meaning of *destroy* is held in suspension longer than is desirable. (See also *Infinitive.*)

In other compound forms of the verb the adverb is usually placed before the basic word: "The building had been *completely* destroyed." Or, if emphasis is wanted upon the adverb: "The building had been destroyed *completely.*" But to place the adverb between the auxiliary parts of the verb is illogical.

Wrong: The building had completely been destroyed.

Adverbial and adjective modifiers, whether words, phrases, or clauses, must be so placed that the meaning cannot be mistaken. Otherwise "howlers" like the following may result: "For sale, a baby carriage by a lady with one slightly damaged wheel."

G 16. COMPARISON.

Adjectives and adverbs are inflected to show degrees of value. In the regular comparison we have:

Positive Degree	Comparative Degree	Superlative Degree
hot	hotter	hottest
long	longer	longest

Sometimes the phrasal method must be used:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
surprising	more surprising	most surprising
awkwardly	more awkwardly	most awkwardly

There is also an irregular comparison:

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
bad, evil, ill	worse	worst
far	farther, further	farthest, furthest
good, well	better	best
late	later, latter	latest, last
little	less	least
many, much	more	most
east, eastern	more eastern	easternmost

Certain adjectives, like *unique* and *matchless,* do not admit comparison.

When two objects or persons are compared, the comparative degree is correct.

John has *greater* weight, but Chuck is the *faster* on his feet.

The tendency to use the superlative when only two objects are compared should be avoided.

G 17. PREPOSITION.

A preposition is a word showing the relation between a substantive and some other word.

A lady *of* quality.

The preposition with its substantive (object) forms a *prepositional phrase,* the phrase having the function of a single part of speech.

Prepositions are:

Simple: for, on, in.
Compound: in regard to, in accordance with, in agreement with.
Participial: regarding, respecting, excepting.

A preposition may occasionally be used with good effect at the end of a sentence. "Where are you *at*?" is ridiculous, but "What are you waiting *for*?" is good idiom.

G 18. CONJUNCTIONS AND CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS.

A conjunction is a word or word group used to join words, larger sentence elements, or sentences. Connectives may be pure conjunctions, such as *and, or, but,* or they may be conjunctive adverbs such as *while, yet, however.*

If the conjunction connects elements of equal value it is called a coördinating conjunction.

The principal relationships shown by coördinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs are:

1. Addition: *and, furthermore, moreover, besides, likewise, for example, specifically, first, secondly.*
2. Alternation: *or, nor, either . . . or, neither . . . nor.*
3. Consequence: *accordingly, consequently, so, therefore.*
4. Contrast: *but, however, nevertheless, yet, on the contrary.*

If the conjunction makes one part of the sentence dependent or contingent upon another part, it is a subordinating conjunction.

The principal relationships shown by subordinating conjunctives (conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs) are:

1. Cause or reason: *because, since.*
2. Concession: *although, for all, in spite of, notwithstanding, though.*
3. Condition: *if, in case that, provided, unless.*
4. Degree or comparison: *according to, as . . . as, as compared with, as if, in proportion to, like, rather than, than, the . . . the.*
5. Place: *where, wherever, whence.*
6. Purpose or result: *for the purpose of, in order that, lest, that, with the intention of, so that, too . . . to.*
7. Time: *when, while, before, after, as, as soon as, since, until, whenever.*

(It should be remembered that relative clauses, appositive and absolute constructions, and participial and gerund phrases are all constructions which may be used to subordinate sentence elements.)

Correlative conjunctions are conjunctions used in pairs: *either . . . or; neither . . . nor; both . . . and; not only . . . but.*

G 19. SENTENCE.

A sentence is a group of related words containing a subject and predicate.

The *subject* names the thing about which something is said.

The *predicate* makes some assertion or asks a question, or makes some demand of the subject.

The basic part of the whole subject is the *simple subject.* It may be a noun, a pronoun, a participial or gerund phrase, or a clause. (See *Clause, Gerund, Participle.*)

The basic part of the predicate is the *simple predicate* (*i.e.*, the verb or verb phrase).

In the following sentences the simple subject and simple predicate are italicized:

The *Governor* of California *arrived* on the four o'clock train.
To write the report required several days.

Sentences are classified according to meaning into:

Declarative: The stag at eve had drunk his fill.
Imperative: (You) Make haste slowly.
Interrogative: Is wisdom driven quite from me?
Exclamatory: Lay on, Macduff!

Sentences are classified according to grammatical structure into:

Simple (a single predication): Browning died in Italy.
Compound (two or more coördinate clauses): The sun went down, and the stars came out.
Complex (one independent clause, with one or more subordinate clauses): My eyes make pictures when they are shut.
Compound-complex (two independent, with one or more dependent clauses): The Red Cross train hurled itself forward through the dark, and though their discomfort was great, many of the wounded slept.

For loose, periodic, balanced, and other rhetorical types, see Chapter on the Sentence.

G 20. CLAUSES.

A clause is a group of related words containing a subject and predicate. Clauses are classified as *Principal* or Independent, and as *Subordinate* or Dependent:

Principal: A clause is a group of related words . . .
Subordinate: Which contains a subject and predicate.

Subordinate clauses have the use of certain parts of speech:

A noun clause (as subject): *That he will be the next president* seems certain.
Adverbial clause: Don't talk to me *when I am driving.*
Adjectival clause (Restrictive): The ball *which I gave you* has been repainted.

G 21. COMPLEMENTS.

A complement is a noun, pronoun, adjective, verbal noun, verbal adjective, or a phrase or clause used as one of these parts of speech, which is necessary to complete the meaning of a verb.

An *object complement* or *direct object* is the part of the sentence which names the receiver of the action:

The president made *a speech.* (Noun as direct object)
The president said *what every right-thinking man likes to hear.* (Relative clause used as direct object)
I like *to write.* (Infinitive used as direct object)
He enjoys *making speeches.* (Gerund phrase used as direct object)

An *indirect object* names the person or thing for whom, or to whom or which, the action was done:

The father sent *his son* a check. (Noun as indirect object)
During the demonstration the clerks served *whoever came* a cup of tea. (Clause used as indirect object)

An *objective complement* is a noun, adjective, participle, phrase or clause placed after a direct object to complete the meaning of the verb:

The "dry" vote made Hoover *president.* (The noun *president* appearing after the direct object *Hoover* is necessary to complete the meaning of the verb.

Green apples made the boy *sick*. (Adjective as objective complement)

We found him *reading* the morning paper. (Participle used as objective complement)

We shall name the club *whatever seems suitable*. (Clause used as objective complement)

Copulative verbs (*q. v.*) require a noun or adjective, or a phrase or clause which has the function of a noun or adjective, to complete their meaning.

G 22. AGREEMENT IN GRAMMATICAL NUMBER

Subject and verb must be in the same number, *i.e.*, both must be singular or both must be plural.

Collective nouns, such as *committee, Congress, group*, etc., are regarded as singular or plural as the case may be, depending upon whether the writer is thinking of the collection as a unit or as a plurality. (See page 763.)

Everyone, each, either, neither, anyone, nobody, everybody, are singular.

Reference pronouns must agree with their antecedents in number.

Right: Has *everyone* handed in *his* paper?[1]

Compound subjects take plural verbs:

Right: Grammar and rhetoric are not the same thing.

Subject nouns joined by connectives showing alternation or choice are not compound:

Right: Neither Helen nor Mary *is* blond.

[1] Though often in colloquial, and sometimes in formal literary use, we find the plural pronoun referring to a singular antecedent. For example, so good a craftsman as Galsworthy writes the sentence, "Each of these ladies held fans in *their* hands" (*Forsyte Saga*, p. 3). The only excuse for such a deviation from customary usage is, of course, that a strong sense of plurality in the writer's mind dictates the plural form. A similar type of division between the older grammatical standard and present practice is to be observed in the case of the frequent use of the plural verb with *none*, as in, "We were after salmon, but none *were* running that day." The *New English Dictionary* (Oxford) tells us that *none* is now more frequently written with the plural verb than with the singular.

Prepositional phrases joined to the subject do not change the number of the verb.

Right: The total *number* of persons present *is* the same as we had yesterday.

The above rule applies to such common linking words as *with, together with, as well as, no less than, including.*

Right: Professor Pike, with a party of four, *was* marooned on the island.

G 23. ANTECEDENT.

The antecedent is the noun or other substantive to which a pronoun refers:

Emerson, when he was in college, was not considered brilliant.

When there is more than one person or thing to which a pronoun could refer, great care must be taken to avoid ambiguity.

Bad: Jones owed money to Smith, who had written to him, saying that he had been expecting a check from him, but that he had not yet received it.

Better: Smith wrote Jones, who owed him money, saying that the expected check had not yet arrived.

G 24. DANGLING CONSTRUCTION.

Participial and gerund phrases are said to be dangling when the doer or the receiver of the action suggested by the participle or gerund is not clearly named in the clause succeeding the participial or gerund phrase.

Wrong: *Being six years old,* my mother took me to school.
Wrong: *On turning the corner,* the capitol flashed suddenly into view.
Right: *Being* six years old, *I* was taken by my mother to school.
Right: On *turning* the corner, *I* saw the capitol.

Care must be taken that the participle or gerund shall not attach itself to the wrong substantive.

G 25. ABSOLUTE AND OTHER INDEPENDENT CONSTRUCTIONS.

A word or phrase with no syntactical relation to any word in the sentence is said to be in the absolute construction.

The day being foggy, the transatlantic flyers were unable to take off.

The participial phrase has no syntactical relation to any word in the clause which follows. *Day* actually serves as subject for the verbal adjective *being*, but because there is no finite verb, *day* is said to be in the nominative absolute.

It should be noted that absolute participial phrases usually have a causal or other relation to the predication which follows. Compare the sentence above with

Because the day was foggy, the transatlantic flyers were unable to take off.

Absolute participial phrases often express general truths or general actions and hence it is not necessary that they be attached to the subject of the clause which follows:

Comparatively speaking, he is not a rich man.

The absolute phrase must be carefully distinguished from the dangling participial phrase. See *Dangling Construction*.

Closely related to the absolute construction, grammatically, are such independent usages as are illustrated by the italicized words, phrases, and clauses in the following:

This, *to be sure*, is not an entire success.
My technique, *it must be admitted*, was somewhat faulty.
There is, *alas*! no other way left.
Is this, *indeed*, your only ambition?

G 26. APPOSITIVE.

An appositive is a substantive (word, phrase, or clause) placed close to another substantive for the purpose of explaining it.

It is I, *John*.
At six o'clock we drove into Montpelier, *the capital of the Green Mountain state*.
His great ambition, *to become president of the United States*, was never realized.

The appositive is usually set off with commas or with dashes. There are a few appositive constructions in which the appositive may be regarded as restrictive to the principal noun, that is, necessary for identification. In such cases it is not set off by any punctuation:

He appointed my brother *John.*
You *girls* must be home at ten o'clock.

G 27. IDIOM.

Idiom is expression which in structure or syntax is peculiar to a particular language or dialect. An idiomatic expression is a word combination which gives a total meaning different from the logically combined meanings of the individual words in the expression. In this respect idiom resembles slang. The difference is that the arbitrary uses of words in such slang expressions as *peddles a hot line* are not universal and are short lived. Such slang consequently never gets the approval of careful speakers and writers. Idiom, while it may be contrary to the rules of grammar and may even be illogical, is firmly established by long usage. Everyone should strive to master the word order and word combinations which are idiomatic. "He *comes by* his love of the sea naturally." "*Many a man* has felt the charm of the sea." In these expressions words are used in a peculiar way which though not logical is accepted as good usage.

Idiom, because there is usually something illogical about it, something in the total expression which cannot be got out of the syntactical relationship of the words, is the despair of translators. The impossibility of translating idiom is particularly apparent in dialect, for dialect (a low order of the idiom) is full of peculiar word combinations and usages.

Idiom should not be confused with the long-established figurative expressions. *Hiding one's light under a bushel, breaking the ice, letting him down easily*, are figures of speech; they are not peculiar word combinations which have through long usage become accepted.

II. PUNCTUATION

P 1. APOSTROPHE.

(1) The apostrophe is used to indicate possessive case. To the singular we usually add the apostrophe and *s*, as in "the man's coat." If the plural ends in *s* we add the apostrophe: "boys' caps." If the plural is formed by vowel change or by adding a suffix, the possessive is formed by adding the apostrophe and *s*: "men's coats"; "children's clothing."

The possessive of proper names is usually formed by adding an apostrophe and *s*: "Smith's car"; "Keats's poetry." If the name is of more than one syllable and ends in *s*, only the apostrophe is added: "Dickens' novels." [1]

The possessive of firm names is formed by adding the apostrophe and *s*, or simply the apostrophe to the last word in the firm name:

Newton, Endicott Company's store.
Harper and Brothers' book list.

But where separate ownerships or origin is implied, each name shows possession:

Shaw's and Morgan's banks.
Gray's and Burns's palms.

(2) The possessive pronouns (its, hers, his, ours, yours, theirs) are written without the apostrophe. Do not confuse *its* and *it's*. The possessive of the indefinite pronoun *one* does require an apostrophe: *one's*.

[1] There is not agreement on this point, however. The authors of this book, for instance, are of divided opinion on the matter, one holding the view that the possessive of all proper names should be formed by adding *'s*, as in *Dickens's* one feeling that the use of the apostrophe or the apostrophe and *s* in proper words of either one syllable or of more than one should be determined almost wholly by the sound, as *Burns's* but *Fries', Symonds's* but *Beddoes'*, the third taking the stand set forth above.

(3) The plural of letters, words, and symbols is indicated by the use of the apostrophe:

Three A's; six 5's; too many *and's.*

(4) Contractions, the omission of letters, are indicated by use of the apostrophe: can't; haven't; o'clock.

(5) The compounds *any one else* and *anybody else* form their possessives thus: *any one else's, anybody else's* (not *any one's else, anybody's else*).

P 2. BRACKETS.

Brackets, [ ], are used to indicate matter inserted into quoted or reprinted material by an editor or by one quoting:

The letter was signed "W [illiam]. H [erbert]."

The Kynges Maiestie . . . strightly chargeth and commaundeth al and every his Maiesties subjects . . . that from the ix day of this present moneth of August [1549] untill the feast of all Sainctes nexte coming, thei ne any of them, openly or secretly play in the English tongue any kynde of Interlude, Plaie, Dialogue or other matter set forth in forme of Plaie. . . .

P 3. COLON.

(1) The modern use of the colon is as *a mark of introduction.* It follows a clause or other unit which has raised certain expectations in the reader. The colon is therefore a mark which helps to secure emphasis on that which follows it:

The first use to which she put her money was significant: she paid off her father's debts.

(2) Use the colon to introduce a long quotation.

(3) Use the colon after the salutation of a business letter: *Dear Sir: Gentlemen: My dear Mr. Snell:*

(4) Use the colon to introduce a long or significant series:

There are five causes of crime: heredity, poverty, ignorance, idleness and alcohol.

If *namely* is used, the colon precedes: "There are five causes: namely, heredity . . ."

(5) Use a colon in writing the hour: *3:40 o'clock.*

P 4. COMMA.

Use the comma in the following instances:

(1) To set off appositives:

We were introduced to Selma Lagerlöf, the Swedish novelist.

We arrived at the village of Elstow, the birthplace of Bunyan, at six o'clock.

Exceptions: "My friend Jack"; "the poet Burns."

(2) To set off single words, phrases, or other elements in series. A comma is preferred between the last two members of the series, even when a conjunction is used:

The rockets burst into red, blue, and green stars.

His ambition was to be rich, to be influential, and to be respected.

Sometimes two or more substantives may, because of habitual association, be thought of as constituting a single member of a series:

We had coffee, rolls, bacon and eggs, and jam.

(3) To separate *long* clauses in a compound sentence, even when a conjunction is used:

His income amounted to five thousand dollars per annum, but it was inadequate to cover the expenses of his extravagant family.

(4) Terms of address are set off by commas:

Jason, bring my slippers.

For once, my friend, you are wrong.

(5) An introductory element, phrase or dependent clause, is set off by a comma:

Prepositional phrase: After all his difficulties, he is at last in easy circumstances.

Exception: In three hours the task was completed.

Gerund phrase: Before building a house, one should consult an architect.

Infinitive phrase: To succeed in a transatlantic flight, one needs both luck and skill.

Dependent clause: Although your inference may be correct, it will be necessary to get more evidence.

Transitional elements: However, you may not agree.

(6) To set off dates and geographical names:

We arrived at Antioch, Ohio, on Friday, July 13, 1928, at six o'clock.

(7) After an interjection which is only mildly exclamatory, use a comma:

Oh, so that was it.
Alas, he was no prophet.
(But the single letter *O* is not so set off: "O heart of mine," etc.)

(8) Nonrestrictive phrases and clauses are set off by commas:

The Lord Chamberlain, *who was also the superior officer of the Master of the Revels,* licensed the play.

Note that the "who" clause is not necessary to the meaning and can be omitted. Compare with the following:

Students *who stay up all night before an examination* make a poor showing.

If we take out the "who" clause in this sentence the meaning is lost. In this instance the clause is restrictive on *students* and is not punctuated. Nonrestrictive phrase: "The Dayton road, *branching off to the right,* is clearly marked with a sign." Restrictive: "The road *branching off to the right* leads to Dayton."

(9) Quotations are separated by commas from the rest of the sentence in which they appear:

Finally we heard him mutter, "I'll come."
"Please hurry," John said, "or it will be too late."

(10) Sometimes a comma is necessary to make the meaning clear:

Misleading: Next morning while I was shaving the horses stampeded.
Right: Next morning while I was shaving, the horses stampeded.

Compare: Instead of being a good fellow, like you he is rather sullen.

Instead of being a good fellow like you, he is rather sullen.

(11) Commas may be used to indicate a short parenthesis:

The servant, thinking the papers of no value, used them to build the fire.

(12) In numbers commas are used to separate the thousands:

2,000,700; two thousand, seven hundred and forty-six.

NOTE: The worst misuse of the comma is the so-called "comma-fault" or "comma-splice", *i.e.,* the use of a comma between independent clauses when no conjunction is used.

Comma-fault: At first glance it looked like an ordinary seaman's chest, the initial "B" was burned into the top.

Grammatical analysis of the structure above will reveal two complete clause patterns, two independent predications. If two such clauses are closely related in subject matter a semicolon may be used between them (see *Semicolon*). If they are not very closely related in subject matter, a period must be used at the end of each clause.

Right: At first glance it looked like an ordinary seaman's chest. The initial "B" was burned into the top.

If a causal or other relation is evident between the clauses, this fact may be indicated by the use of a conjunction or conjunctive adverb. If a pure conjunction (see *Conjunction*) is used, a comma may precede it; if a conjunctive adverb is used a semicolon may be necessary:

Right: At first it seemed a commonplace sort of sea-chest; however, there was an initial 'B' deeply burned into the top.

P 5. DASH.

(1) Use a dash to mark an afterthought or a break in the logical context:

But those who knew him better could not help liking him—he always meant well.

She had no notion of how to deal with him—could not understand him in the least.

(2) Dashes may be used to mark apposition or parenthesis:

Once more the Royal circle at Windsor—their Majesties, the elder Princesses, and some unfortunate Ambassadress or Minister's wife—might be seen for hours round a mahogany table, while the Queen netted a purse, and the King slept.

(3) Occasionally the dash is used to mark emphasis:

She had, he declared, insulted him—grossly and continually.

P 6. EXCLAMATION POINT.

Use the exclamation after a sentence, a sentence fragment, an exclamation in question form, or an interjection, when it is desirable to indicate strong emotion, such as indignation, surprise, terror, or even irony:

Indeed! How dare you!
A pretty story!
Help!

P 7. HYPHEN.

(1) Hyphenate certain compound substantives which are not considered as one word. See *Compound Words.*

(2) Hyphenate compound adjectives:

A *coal-black* horse; a *silver-tongued* orator; a *sure-footed* mule; a *far-reaching* influence; a *walled-up* entrance; a *high-school* graduate. (But "He is a graduate of a good high school.")

See *Rules for Syllable Division.*

P 8. PARENTHESIS.

Parentheses are used to set off inserted elements:

At four o'clock (the time previously agreed upon) the conspirators entered the state chambers.

P 9. PERIOD.

(1) Use a period at the end of every sentence or sentence fragment which is not interrogative or exclamatory:

I speak and write when I have not the courage to be silent.
Don't write. Telegraph.
No.

(2) Use a period after every abbreviation:

Nov., Ark., O., A.D., l.c., q.v., M.D., Mr.

(3) Do not commit the "period fault," that is, do not separate a dependent sentence element from the independent part upon which it must lean:

Wrong: I did not go to college. Although my father offered to pay my expenses.
Right: I did not go to college, although my father offered to pay my expenses.

P 10. QUESTION MARK.

(1) Use the question mark at the end of a direct question:

He asked, "What do you want?"

(2) Do not use the question mark after an indirect question:

He asked what we wanted.

(3) The question mark is sometimes used in parentheses to indicate that a date or fact is doubtful:

Friar Bacon lived from 1214 (?) to 1294.

P 11. QUOTATION MARKS.

(1) Enclose in double quotation marks every direct quotation. According to the most widely accepted practice, period and comma *always come within* the quotation marks. Question mark and exclamation point are inside or outside according to the relationship of the quoted part to the whole sentence: if the quotation is a question or exclamation, but the sentence as a whole is not, the mark comes *within* the quotation marks. If the sentence is a

question or exclamation containing quoted matter at the end, the question mark or exclamation point goes *outside* the quotation marks. The following examples are correct:

"Gentlemen," said Silvio, "circumstances demand my departure."
"I believe, Mr. Holmes, that you have already made up your mind," said Miss Stoner.
"Perhaps I have."
"You see it, Watson?" he yelled.
"It is a swamp adder!" cried Holmes.

(2) Enclose in quotation marks titles of short stories, chapters, essays, and short poems, especially when you also use the title of the volume from which they are taken:

"The Bell of Atri" from *Tales of a Wayside Inn.*

(3) Enclose in quotation marks words used with special significance, or in a manner not usual:

In one sonnet there is continual play on the word "will."
Roosevelt was known for his "big-stick" policy.

(4) When an entire paragraph is quoted (unless special type or different spacing is used) be sure to use quotation marks at the beginning and end. If the quotation is more than one paragraph in length, use quotation marks *at the beginning of each quoted paragraph and at the end of the last quoted paragraph.*

(5) Modern usage requires a new paragraph with each change of speaker.[1]

(6) Indirect quotations are not enclosed:

Direct quotation enclosed: He said, "Your brother has inherited the entire fortune."
Indirect: He told me that my brother had inherited the entire fortune.

(7) Quotation within quotation is enclosed in single marks:[2]

[1] In reporting a brief conversation, however, it is customary to put both sides of the dialogue into a single long paragraph. (See CONRAD, *Lord Jim,* the last half dozen paragraphs of chapter XXXIII.)

[2] A special problem in the use of quotation marks arises when a writer wishes to distinguish between what one of his characters actually says

"At this moment," continued Caleb, "the Sergeant entered. 'Out of here, you duffers,' he yelled. 'The Germans are coming over on a raid!' "

P 12. SEMICOLON.

(1) The semicolon is used to separate coördinate clauses when there is no conjunction:

Yielding to his encouragements, she began to emerge from her seclusion; she appeared in London in semi-state, at hospitals and concerts; she opened Parliament; she reviewed troops and distributed medals at Aldershot.

(2) It is used between clauses of a compound sentence that are joined by one of the conjunctive adverbs: *accordingly, also, besides, in fact, hence, however, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, still, then,* and *thus.* Use of comma before these connectives would be a fault. See *Comma-fault.*

Right: The weather at Capri was not bad; in fact it was very mild for December.

Right: He was a hard taskmaster; however, he was just.

(3) If the clauses of a compound sentence are joined by a simple conjunction, the semicolon should be used to divide them if they are long, or if they contain commas:

Our ship was a clipper, with every rag set, stunsails, sky-scrapers and all; nor was it easy to believe that such a wonder could be built of canvas as that white many-storied pile of cloud that stooped over me or drew back as we rose and fell with the waves.

---

and what he thinks to himself. Christopher Morley, in his *Thunder on the Left,* indicated this difference by italicizing the thoughts; Galsworthy solved the problem, somewhat more satisfactorily perhaps, by putting the thoughts in single, the speeches in double, quotation marks. (See, for example, *The Forsyte Saga,* pages 302, 324, etc.)

III. MISCELLANEOUS

M 1. ABBREVIATIONS.

In the body of a composition abbreviations are generally objectionable. Names of the months, of streets, of states occurring in a sentence should be spelled out in full. When they occur in a regular prose context the following words should also be spelled out: Company, Building, Doctor, Professor, President, Captain, Colonel, General.

Right: We asked permission of the John Lane Company to reprint the essay by Professor Huxley.

The doctor has his offices in the Hancock Building on Fifth Avenue.

Certain abbreviations are permitted. When prefixed to names we should use Dr., Mr., Mrs., Messrs. Reverend and Honorable may also be abbreviated when they precede the person's name. Following names we may also use certain abbreviations: Esq., M.D., D.D., Ph.D., M.P., Jr., Sr.

Dr. John Brooks, M.D., may be consulted Mondays at three p.m.

Such abbreviations as p.m., a.m., *i.e.*, *e.g.*, etc., *q.v.*, *viz.*, A.D., B.C., are permissible. The first two of this list cannot, however, be used unless an hour is named:

Wrong: I will see you this p.m.
Right: I will see you this afternoon.
Right: I will see you at five p.m.

To use abbreviations in formal speech is to commit a barbarism. In footnotes one may use such abbreviations as:

Co., ch. (chapter), p., pp. (plural of *page*), ed. (editor or edited, or edition), vol., no.

In letters abbreviations should not be used in the heading or in the inside address:

Right:

1209 Gardner Avenue
Ann Arbor, Michigan
April 29, 1928

Harper and Brothers
49 East 33rd Street
New York, New York

Gentlemen:

M 2. ALLUSION.

An allusion is a partial or incomplete reference to facts or quotations supposedly known to the reader. Allusive material is of value because of the associations which the partial reference sets going in the reader's mind. The danger in using allusion and reference is that (1) the allusion may be to material unknown to the reader and hence miss fire; (2) the matter alluded to may be trite to the reader.

M 3. BARBARISM.

A word newly coined, or a shortening of an established word, is not accepted as good usage. *Pitilacker, scofflaw, enthused, auto* are barbarisms. Foreign words called in when there is no native word to describe a new thing or act, are usually accepted at once, though all such words are at first barbarisms in the country into which they are introduced. *Tonneau, chassis, cliché* are examples of words which were quickly accepted.

For additional discussion of *Barbarism, Impropriety,* and *Slang,* see Chapter VIII on Words.

M 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

A bibliography is a list of books and articles. The purpose of giving a list of books and articles is (1) to indicate the sources used for a certain piece of work; (2) to give a complete list of every-

thing pertaining to a certain subject which has been published; (3) to give a selected list of valuable or recent sources. Enough information must be given to enable the reader to secure the work referred to without trouble. In form, it must be consistent throughout. When a book is in more than one edition, the bibliography must give the particular edition to which reference is made.

Uhler, John Earle, *A Review of English Grammar.* Harper and Brothers, New York and London, 1926.

Lewisohn, Ludwig, "The Politics of a Man of Letters," *Harpers Magazine,* Jan., 1928.

M 5. CAPITAL LETTERS.

In the printer's language capitals are called *upper case,* and small letters are called *lower case.* Capitals should be used with:

1. The first word of a sentence, or of a fragment which is intended to take the place of a sentence.
2. The first word of every direct quotation.
3. The first word of every line of poetry.
4. Proper names and proper adjectives:
   a. Names of persons and the adjectives derived from them:

      Marco Polo; Darwinian theory, Gladstone bag. After much usage, however, the origin of such adjectives (and sometimes nouns) becomes obscured, and the capitals are dropped. Thus we have *colossal proportions, macadam roads,* and *mackintoshes.*

   b. Names of geographical, ethnological, and political divisions, or the adjectives derived from them:

      British Empire, the Orient, Central America, the *Andes Mountains, Washtenaw County, Negro, Indian, Caucasian, Laurentian Glacier, Mississippi Valley,* valley of the *Huron River, Eastern Oregon,* the *West, Dutch cheese;* but we have western accent, china dishes, morocco leather, traveling south.

   c. Names of organizations, departments of government, historical events of importance, titles of treaties, and of laws:

Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, American Legion, Department of State, Battle of Malden, Treaty of Versailles, Baumes Law, Volstead Act, Ordinance of 1827, the *Reform Bill.*

d. Civil, military, or religious titles:
Mr. Smith, *Esq.;* the *Hon.* Mr. Paulding; *Rev.* Jones; *Colonel* Newcomb; *King* George; *Governor* Green; *Cardinal* Newman.

When a definite individual is referred to we also write the *Colonel,* the *President,* the *Queen;* but, "The doctor arrived at six, the minister an hour later."

e. Names of months, days, holidays and special seasons or divisions of time are capitalized:
February, Tuesday, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Whitsun, Fourth of July, Decoration Day, Labor Day.

The names of the seasons, winter, spring, etc., are not capitalized unless personified, or unless they have an initial position.

f. Titles of books, plays, articles, chapters, newspapers, magazines.

g. The first person pronoun *I* and the interjection *O.*

h. Words denoting relationship when used without pronoun or adjective in such constructions as:

Where to, Uncle?
I sent Mother a telegram.
But: "Where to?" he said to his uncle.
"I sent my mother a telegram."

NOTE: Some newspapers make a practice of using as few capitals as possible. Consequently in such a title as Laurentian Glacier, or Columbia River, or Carleton College they capitalize only the first word. The important thing is to follow one method consistently.

M 6. COMPOUND WORDS.

(1) A compound word is made up of two or more words which through much use together have come to be considered as one.

When they still retain a good part of their individual value we connect them with a hyphen. One is always puzzled about certain terms: are they made up of two words? Are they hyphenated? Are they so well established that the hyphen has been dropped? Following is a list of troublesome compound terms:

Two Words	Hyphenates	One Word
all right	anti-vivisectionist	already
any one (also, anyone)	by-law	although
at any rate	by-product	altogether
bank book	cat-o'-nine-tails	anybody
basket ball (also, basketball)	comittee-man	anything
	dark-blue	anywhere
bird dog	double-barrelled	baseball
down town	ex-president	bedroom
every one (also, everyone)	far-flung	birthday
	father-in-law	cannot
folk song	fire-irons	everybody
half sister	four-in-hand	folklore
hand to mouth	full-fledged	football
ice boat	good-by	foothill
in so far	great-grandfather	foothold
life guard	hyphen-compound	footsore
live stock	left-handed	grandmother
mortar board	light-hearted	handwriting
mud guard	loud-speaker	iceberg
night letter	mail-carrier	inasmuch
one's self (also, oneself)	man-of-war	lawsuit
	non-Latinist	letterhead
open house	non-use	lifetime
parcel post	on-coming	lightweight
real estate	safe-keeping	limelight
rule of thumb	self-control	lukewarm
side line	self-reliance	moreover
side show	short-lived	necktie
steam engine	summer-time	nevertheless
street car	take-off	notwithstanding
strictly speaking	three-inch	oilskin
table d'hôte	tittle-tattle	overcharge
terra cotta	trade-mark	oversize
thumb print	twenty-one	postmaster
tour de force	vice-president	rainfall
up to date	well-nigh	shortsighted

Two Words	Hyphenates	One Word
whipping post	will-o'-the-wisp	sidewalk
	word-formation	stepfather
		taxpayer
		today (also, to-day)
		tomorrow (also, to-morrow)
		touchback
		touchdown
		typewriter
		waterproof

In the formation of compound substantives there is no rule. Each word is an individual case to be studied and learned.

(2) In the matter of compound adjectives the rule is always to use the hyphen: *all-round* athlete, *high-school* graduate (but a graduate from high school), *half-hearted* attack.

However, do not mistake an adverb plus an adjective for a compound adjective. Thus, we do not hyphenate *well furnished* room because *well* is an adverb modifying the adjective *furnished*. We do, however, hyphenate such combinations as *well-known, well-born, well-bred,* and *well-nigh.*

(3) Insert the hyphen in compounds made with *self-* and *vice: self-reliance, self-importance, self-defense, self-help,* (but *selfsame*); *vice-chairman, vice-consul, vice-president.*

(4) Insert the hyphen when a prefix is added to a proper name: *anti-Jacobin, pro-British, neo-Hellenism, pre-Volstead.*[1]

M 7. DATES.

(1) In the heading or in the body of letters, or in any prose context, do not abbreviate the names of the months:

October 12, 1928.

(2) Insert a comma between the number of the day and the number of the year.

(3) If the date appears in the middle of a sentence use a comma after the number of the year also:

On October 12, 1928, he arrived in Ann Arbor.

[1] For an illuminating discussion of the use of the hyphen, see Fowler, *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage.*

(4) Do not use *st, th, rd, nd,* with the number of the day. If one wishes to be very formal in his prose, or if he is writing a formal note, the following forms are correct:

October twelfth.
The twelfth of October.

(5) Do not clip the number of the year to '28. Write 1928.
(6) In letter headings do not write 10/12/28.

M 8. FORMAL NOTES.

In formal invitations and acceptances the first personal pronoun is not used; numbers are spelled out, and no initials or abbreviations are used, except such as Mr. and Mrs.:

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brockway Bloom request the pleasure of your company at dinner on Wednesday evening, October twelfth, at seven o'clock.

Five Cumnor Place,
October fifth.

Whether or not R.S.V.P. (*Répondez, s'il vous plâit*) appears in one corner of a formal invitation, an answer is required. Neither invitation nor reply is signed. No heading or salutation is used:

Mr. Hunt accepts with pleasure the invitation to dine on Wednesday, October twelfth.

409 John Day Street,
October eighth.

M 9. ITALICS. (See TITLES.)

Italics are often useful for emphasizing classifications in the body of the treatment of a subject. They have an advantage of seeming less formal than classifications set apart from the continuous prose structure. However, italics for emphasis should be used very sparingly. Some publishers frown on them altogether.

[LETTERS AND FIGURES, Plurals of. See PLURALS.]

M 10. LETTERS, BUSINESS AND PERSONAL.

Business letters should be written (typed if possible) upon a good grade of paper, 8½ x 11 inches in size. Avoid all stereo-

typed expressions such as "yours of the eighth ultimo received and contents noted." Arrange the heading, the inside address, the body of the letter, the complimentary close and the signature so that they will make a pleasing appearance. Space the parts so that a balanced design is produced, with plenty of white margin. Usually it is better to use double spacing.

Note carefully the punctuation and arrangement of the heading and inside address:

3790 Vicksburg Street
Detroit, Michigan
August 29, 1928

Mr. Henry Hamm
6507 Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Sir:

If the addressee is personally known to the writer the salutation may be more familiar than "Dear Sir." The usual salutations are given below, arranged from the most formal to the most familiar:

Dear Sir:

My dear Mr. Hamm:
Dear Mr. Hamm:
Dear Henry,

After formal salutations the colon is the accepted punctuation; the comma is preferred after the familiar salutation. Note which words are capitalized and which are not.

Avoid a flowery close. End the last sentence with a period. The usual forms of complimentary close are:

Yours truly,
Yours very truly,
Very truly yours,

Single words like *Sincerely, Cordially,* etc., without the *yours* are not in good form. The complimentary close is followed by a comma.

M 11. NUMBERS, HOW TO WRITE.

If a certain piece of writing contains many numbers, use figures for all, unless a sentence begins with a number, in which case write out the word. One cannot begin a sentence with a figure.

If a piece of writing contains numbers, but they do not occur near each other, use the folowing rule: *If the number can be expressed in one or two words, spell out;* if more than two words are required, use figures. Thus one would spell out twenty-five; one thousand; sixteen; ten million. One would use figures for 101; 721; 50021.

Do not spell out dates, street numbers, page numbers, room numbers.

Right: I first saw France on August 12, 1918.
Right: We watched two thousand recruits march past our hotel at 5 Cité Bergere.

Money is usually represented by figures; however, if there is no other number near, or if it is a round number (*one million, five thousand*), it is better to spell out the word.

When dollars and cents are involved in the sum use the figures and the dollar sign:

Clumsy: These gloves cost three dollars and seventy-five cents.
Better: These gloves cost $3.75.

Words such as *twenty-one, ninety-five,* etc., are compounds and are hyphenated. *One hundred, ten thousand,* are not hyphenated. A comma and the conjunction *and* is usually inserted in large numbers written out:

One thousand, two hundred and fifty-six Germans were killed in the first engagement.

M 12. PARENTHESIS.

A parenthesis is a word, phrase, clause, or longer division, inserted into a context to which it is related, but not closely enough to be included as a regular part of the context. A parenthesis can therefore be taken out entirely without injuring the logical sequence of the sentence or discourse in which it appears. Parenthesis is marked at each end by a comma, dash, or parenthesis sign.

When the part inserted has been contributed by an editor instead of by the original writer, the bracket is used.

Right: Mrs. St. John Burden (née Mary Hootkins) is the social dictator of the town.

Right: The chief of police—who is also justice of the peace and prosecuting attorney—has no mercy on the violators of the speed-law.

M 13. PLURALS.

(1) The plural number is usually indicated by adding *s* to the singular.

books, games.

(2) If the singular ends in an *s* sound (s, sh, ch, z, x) the plural is formed by adding *es*:

churches, boxes.

(3) Some nouns, the singular of which ends in *o* preceded by a consonant, also form the plural by adding *es*:

tomatoes, potatoes, Negroes, mementoes, mulattoes, buffaloes, heroes.

Common exceptions are:

pianos, banjos, solos, dynamos, Navajos, violoncellos, quartos, octavos, salvos.

(4) If the final *o* is preceded by a vowel, the plural is formed by adding *s*:

cameos, folios, nuncios, radios, rodeos.

(5) Nouns whose singular ends in *y* preceded by a consonant, change the *y* to *i* and add *es*:

pennies, lilies.

But proper names ending in *y* simply add *s*:

Last night there were four *Marys*.

(6) Some nouns ending in *f* or *fe*, form the plural by changing *f* to *v*, and adding *s* or *es*:

scarves, wives, leaves.

Some nouns have a double form:

staves, staffs, hooves, hoofs.

A common exception is the plural of roof: *roofs.*

(7) Some nouns form the plural by an internal vowel change:

men, women, feet, teeth, geese, mice, lice.

(8) Some nouns have the same form in the plural as in the singular:

deer, fish (also sometimes fishes), trout, moose, grouse.

(9) Some nouns have a plural form which is also used for the singular:

athletics, æsthetics, ethics, physics (the noun *physic* is quite another word), civics, mathematics.

But *scissors* and *trousers* are always used in the plural.

(10) Compound words usually form the plural on the most important word in the combination:

Brothers-in-law, editors-in-chief, attorneys-general.

But: spoonfuls, cupfuls. (Unless one has reference to several in a group: Four sacksful of sugar stood on the floor.)

(11) Plurals of proper names:

The plural of *Mr.* is *Messrs.*
The plural of *Miss* is *Misses.*
The plural used for *Mrs.* is *Mesdames.*

Right: Messrs. Jones and Smith will play Messrs. White and Gray.
Right: The Misses Smith have returned from Bryn Mawr.
Right: The Smiths, the Joneses, the Thompkinses.

(12) The plural of letters, figures, and words is indicated by apostrophe and *s*:

Right: He earned four A's the first semester.
Right: Your 3's look like 8's.
Right: There are too many *and's.*

(13) Plurals of words borrowed from foreign languages: When the singular ends in *a*, the plural is usually in *æ*:

alumna, alumnæ.

When the singular ends in *um*, the plural usually ends in *a*:

curriculum, curricula.

When the singular ends in *us*, the plural usually ends in *i*:

alumnus, alumni.

When the singular ends in *is*, the plural usually ends in *es*:

thesis, theses.

When the singular ends in *on*, the plural usually ends in *a*:

phenomenon, phenomena.

When the singular ends in *eau*, the plural usually ends in *x*.

beau, beaux.[1]

M 14. ROMAN NUMERALS.

Use Roman numerals (capitals) for articles of documents, for chapters of books, acts of plays, and names of rulers. Use lower-case Roman numerals for scenes of plays. Use Arabic numerals for sections of documents, pages of books, verses of the Bible, lines of plays:

Article X, Section 3; Chapter VIII, page 42; George V; Act IV, scene iii, line 62; Proverbs XXV, 2.

ROMAN NUMERALS:

1. I	5. V
2. II	6. VI
3. III	7. VII
4. IV	8. VIII

[1] There is a considerable tendency to Anglicize the plurals of many foreign nouns. Thus, *beaus, formulas, gymnasiums* are frequently to be found, displacing *beaux, formulæ,* and *gymnasiæ.* For further discussion of this point, see FOWLER, *op. cit.*, on *Latin Plurals*, and FRIES, *The Teaching of the English Language,* page 42.

9.	IX	70.	LXX
10.	X	80.	LXXX
11.	XI	90.	XC
20.	XX	100.	C
30.	XXX	500.	D
40.	XL	900.	CM
50.	L	1000.	M
60.	LX	1928.	MCMXXVIII

M 15. SPELLING.

There are a few rules for spelling which are worth memorizing:

(1) A monosyllable or a word accented on the last syllable, if it ends in a single consonant preceded by a short vowel, doubles the final consonant when a suffix beginning with a vowel is added:

mad, madder; compel, compelling (but *compels*); *occur, occurrence, occurred* (but *occurs*).

(2) Words ending in silent *e* usually drop the *e* before a suffix beginning with a vowel:

dine, dining; place, placing.

Exceptions: some words ending in *ce* or *ge*:

service, serviceable; courage, courageous.

(3) For rules for forming plurals, see *Plurals*.

(4) Words ending in *y* preceded by a consonant usually change *y* to *i* before a suffix.

happy, happiness; busy, business.

Exception: Verbs ending in *y* do not drop the *y* before *ing*:

study, studying.

(5) Verbs ending in *ie* change *ie* to *y* before *ing*:

die, dying; lie, lying.

(6) Words ending in *l* do not drop the *l* before *ly*:

final, finally.

(7) Words in *ei* and *ie*: Usually *ei* is used after *c*; after other letters, *ie: receive, believe, deceive, reprieve.*
Exceptions: *seize, leisure, weird, neither.*

Following is a list of words commonly misspelled:

abbreviate
absence
accept (*to receive*)
except (*to exclude*)
access (*admittance*)
excess (*superabundance*)
accessible
accident
accommodate
accompanying (Rule 4)
accumulate
accustom
acquainted
acquitted (Rule 1)
across
additionally (Rule 6)
address
advice (noun)
advise (verb)
adviser
aëroplane
affect (verb, *to influence*)
effect (verb, *to accomplish*)
effect (noun, *result*)
aggravate
aisle (*a passageway*)
isle (*island*)
alliteration
allotted
allusion (*reference*)
illusion (*false idea*)
already
altar (*for worship*)
alter (*to change*)
altogether
amateur
analysis
analyze
annual
answer
anxiety
apiece
apology
apparatus
apparent
appearance
appreciate
appropriate
arctic
arguing (Rule 2)
argument
arising (Rule 2)
arrangement
arranging (Rule 2)
arrive
arriving (Rule 2)
article
ascend
ascent
assent (*agreement*)
assassin
association
athlete
athletic
attack
attendance
audience
auxiliary
awkward
bachelor
balance
banana
Baptist
baptize
barbarous
barely

baring (*to bare.* Rule 2)
barring (*to bar.* Rule 1)
bearing (*to carry or endure*)
beggar
believe (Rule 7)
benefit
benefited
berth (*bed*)
  birth (*beginning*)
biscuit
boarder (*one who boards*)
border (*edge, boundary*)
born (*"born in 1900"*)
borne (*carried* or *supported by; given birth to*)
boundary
breadth (*width*)
breath (*of air*)
breathe (*verb*)
bridal (*wedding*)
bridle (*for a horse*)
brilliant
Britain (*the country*)
Britannia
Briton (*a native*)
buoyant
bureaus
burglar
bus
business
cafeteria
calendar
candidate
capital (*city*)
capitol (*building*)
career
carriage
caucus
ceiling (Rule 7)
cemetery
certain
chagrined
changeable (Rule 2)
changing
chaperon
chauffeur
chautauqua
choosing (Rule 2)
chord (*of music*)
  cord (*of wood; string*)
clothes (*garments*)
cloths (*plural of cloth*)
coarse (*not fine*)
  course (*path, series*)
colonel
column
coming (Rule 2)
commission
commit
committed (Rule 1)
committee
comparatively
compel
compelled (Rule 1)
competent
complement (*completing part*)
compliment (*praise*)
comradeship
concede
conceit (Rule 7)
conceive
conference
conferring (Rule 1)
confers
confidant (noun)
confidence
confident (adjective)
connoisseur
conqueror
conscience
conscientious
conscious
contemptible
continuous
control
controlled (Rule 1)

coolly (Rule 6)
corps (*groups*)
corpse (*dead body*)
costume (*dress*)
custom (*manner*)
council (*assembly*)
councilor (*member of assembly*)
counsel (*to advise,* or *advice*)
counselor (*adviser*)
courteous
courtesy
criticism
criticize
cruelty
cylinder
deceased (*dead*)
diseased (*ill*)
deceit (Rule 7)
deceive (Rule 7)
decent
decide
decision
defendant
definite
descend
descent
describe
description
despair
dessert
device (noun)
devise (verb)
difference
digging (Rule 1)
dining (*eating.* Rule 2)
dinning (*making a noise.* Rule 1)
diphtheria
dirigible
disappear
disappoint
disastrous
discipline
disease
diseased (see *deceased*)
dissatisfied
dissipate
divide
dormitories
dual (*double*)
duel (*a fight*)
dyeing (*coloring*)
dying (*losing life.* Rule 5)
ecstasy
effect (cf. *affect*)
eighth (adjective)
elicit (*to draw out*)
illicit (*unlawful*)
eliminate
embarrass
emphasize
encouraging (Rule 2)
enemy
enemies
equipped (Rule 1)
exaggerate
exceed
excellence
except (cf. *accept*)
exceptionally (Rule 6)
excess (cf. *access*)
exercise
exhaust
exhilarate
existence
expense
explanation
extraordinary
facilities
familiar
fascinate
February
fiery
finally (Rule 6)
financier
forehead
foremost

forfeit
fortieth
forty
four
fourteen
ghost
grammar
grandeur
grief
guard
guess
guidance
handkerchief
harass
having (Rule 2)
height
heinous
hindrance
hoping (Rule 2)
hopping (Rule 1)
humorous
hypnotize
hypocrisy
impromptu
incident
incredible
independent
indictment
indispensable
inference
infinite
innocence
intelligence
intercede
irrelevant
irresistible
knowledge
laboratory
led (past tense of *lead*)
legitimate
leisure
livelihood
loneliness
loose (adjective)
lose (verb)
lovable (Rule 2)
lying (Rule 5)
maintain
maintenance
maneuver
(also *manoeuver*)
mantel (shelf)
mantle (cloak)
manual
manufacture
marriage
marries
mathematics
mattress
metal (as *iron*)
mettle (*spirit*)
millionaire
miniature
minute
mischievous
misspelled
momentous
murmur
muscle
mystery
naïve
necessary
negroes
nineteen
ninety
ninth
noticeable (Rule 2)
notoriety
nucleus
obstacle
occasion
occur
occurring (Rule 1)
occurs
officer
omission

omit
omitted (Rule 1)
oneself
operate
opportunity
optimism
origin
outrageous
overrun
pageant
pamphlet
panicky
parallel
paralysis
parliament
parliamentary
particularly
partner
pastime
perceive (Rule 7)
perform
permissible
perseverance
personnel
persuade
Philippines (but *Filipino*)
physician
picnicking
possess
possible
prairie
precede
precedence
privilege
probably
proceed
professor
pronounce
pronunciation
prove
pumpkin
pursue
quiz
quizzes
really (Rule 6)
recede
receipt (Rule 7)
receive
recognize
recommend
reference
referred (Rule 1)
reign
rein (of a *bridle*)
religious
repetition
replies
representative
reservoir
restaurant
rhetoric
rheumatism
rhyme
rhythm
ridiculous
sacrificing (Rule 2)
sacrilegious
safety
sandwich
scene
schedule
seize
separate
sergeant
severely
shining (Rule 2)
shriek
siege
similar
simultaneous
sincerely
soliloquy
sophisticated
sophomore
specimen
speech (but *speak*)

stopping (Rule 1)
stretch
studying (Rule 4)
succeed
suffrage
superintendent
supersede
suppress
sure
surprise
syllable
symmetry
technical
temperament
temperature
tendency
thousandths
trafficking
tragedy
transferable
tries
truly
Tuesday
typical
tyrannically (Rule 6)
undoubtedly
unprecedented
until
using (Rule 2)
usually (Rule 6)
vengeance
village
villain
weird
woman (singular)
women (plural)
woolly (Rule 6)
writing (Rule 2)
written
yacht

M 16. SYLLABICATION.

In dividing a word which occurs at the end of a line, the division can be made only where actual syllable divisions in the word occur. If in doubt consult a dictionary. Certain rules, however, are of value:

1. Do not divide the fundamental part of a word:

Wrong: foun-dling
Right: found-ling

2. Do not divide so that the reader will be misled as to the pronunciation:

Wrong: bub-onic
Right: bu-bonic

3. Do not try to divide a one-syllable word:

Wrong: talk-ed
Right: talked

4. Do not place a syllable of two letters on the new line. Only one space is saved (the hyphen takes a space), and it does not look well.

5. Usually the division is made between the prefixes and the base of the word, or between the suffixes and the base.

Right: ante-cedent, retro-spect, atten-tion, ascen-sion, happi-ness.

6. Usually, make the division between double consonants, or between two consonants in sequence:

Right: fun-nel, gal-lows, fur-niture, fur-ther-most, stop-ping, fur-ry.

But if the basic word ends in a double consonant, the consonants remain together:

Right: frump-ish, fuss-iness.

7. Division is frequently made after the vowel, especially if the vowel is long:

Right: ho-me-o-path, la-bel, el-o-cu-tion.

8. The dividing of the name of a person always attracts attention, and is therefore best avoided.

M 17. TITLES.

Titles of books, stories, pictures, plays, musical compositions, periodicals, and newspapers are printed in *italics:*

Black April by Julia Peterkin
Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*
Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*
Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*
Bach's *Toccata and Fugue*
Harpers Magazine for July, 1928
A recent issue of the Chicago *Tribune*

In typing or in script italics are indicated by underscoring once.

The title of a chapter, of a short poem, of an essay, or of a story, when the title of the volume from which it may be taken is also used, should be enclosed in quotation marks:

"The Uniformity of American Life" is taken from Bryce's *American Commonwealth.*

Wordsworth's "We are Seven" was first published in *Lyrical Ballads.*

One of the most charming things in *Essays of Elia* is "Old China."

"The Gift of the Magi" will be found in *The Four Million.*

See also *Bibliography.*

IV. A GLOSSARY OF FAULTY EXPRESSIONS AND MISUSED TERMS

A

ABOVE: An adverb. Not good as an adjective: "The *above* statement." Better: "The preceding statement" or "The statement made above."

ACCEPT, EXCEPT: To *accept* means to receive or agree to. "I *accept* your proposal."

To *except* means to leave out of the reckoning, to exclude: "I agree to all of your terms, *except* those relating to the manner of payment."

AFFECT: Usually a verb, meaning *to influence* or *to pretend*:
"Late hours *affect* one's health."
"We were not *affected* by the strike."
"He *affects* (pretends to) simplicity."

AGGRAVATE: Means to add to the burden, to increase. "To aggravate his woe."
The use of aggravate as a synonym for *provoke* or *exasperate* is colloquial, not literary usage.

ALL RIGHT: Two words, never one. Compare: although, altogether, already.

ALL-ROUND: "An all-round athlete."
Not *all-around*.

ALREADY: Means *by this time,* or *before the time* of another fact: "The sun was *already* up."
Compare: "The Mazamas were all ready to start."

ALTOGETHER: Means *completely* or *entirely*: "His conclusion is altogether wrong."
Compare: "We were all together around the fire."

ALUMNI: The masculine plural form, also used to indicate both sexes when spoken of together.

The feminine singular is *alumna.*
The feminine plural is *alumnæ.*
The masculine singular is *alumnus.*
"Graduates" is better to use to include both men and women than the plural of alumnus.

AMONG: Used to indicate position when more than three persons or things are spoken of.
See *between.*

ARRIVED IN, ARRIVED AT: We *arrive in* a large city, *arrive at* a small town, *arrive at* the city hall, or other specific place.

AS: Usually a conjunctive adverb.
"He works as his forbears worked."
"He is as tall as a man."
In negative statements *so* is preferable: "He is not so tall as I am."
Do not use in the sense of *because* or *for*: "He went home, as he had work to do."
See *like.*

B

BESIDE, BESIDES: Beside means *by the side of*: "The tree *beside* the house."
Besides means *in addition to*: "*Besides* traders, there were Indians and lumbermen."

BETWEEN: Used to indicate position when only two objects are spoken of. A person is "between the devil and the deep sea." "Between us three" is questionable usage. See *among.*

BORROW: Distinguish from *lend.*
Right: "I wanted to borrow his car."
Right: "He refused to lend it to me."
See *loan.*

BOY FRIEND: GENTLEMAN FRIEND, LADY FRIEND: Avoid these expressions. They are trite and sometimes cheap.

BREATH, BREATHE, BREADTH: *Breath* is a noun: "He first drew breath in Amiens, France."
Breathe is a verb: "The air we breathe."
Breadth is a noun: "Length and breadth."

BUNCH: Incorrectly used for *group* or *party*.
Right: "A bunch of flowers."
Right: "A group of students."
Wrong: "A bunch of fellows."

C

CAN: Denotes power or ability to do something. "I can type five pages in an hour."
Distinguish from *may*, which denotes *permission*: "You may type your essays if you prefer to do so."

CAN'T HELP BUT: Ungrammatical. Avoided by most careful writers.
Wrong: "I can't help *but* feel sorry for him."
Right: "I can't help *feeling* sorry for him."

CAN'T SEEM: An illogical colloquialism. Say "do not seem able" or "seem unable."

CENSORED, CENSURED: To *censor* means to edit, cutting out what seems objectionable. "During the War, letters written in the war area were *censored* by the army officials."
To *censure* means to criticize adversely: "The Democrats *censured* the Republican administration."

CLAIM: Not to be confused with *assert* or *maintain*.
"He *claims* the championship."
"He *maintained* that California had the best crew."

CLOTH, CLOTHE: *Cloth* is the noun; *clothe*, the verb.

"COMPLECTED": There is no such word. The word is *complexioned*: "a light-complexioned girl."

CONSIDERABLE: Not a noun.
Wrong: "He gained *considerable* during the summer."
Right: "He gained *considerably*."
Right: "He gained *considerable* weight."

CONTINUALLY: Means *repeatedly*, at frequent intervals:
"He complains *continually*."
Compare: *continuously*.

CONTINUOUSLY: Means without stopping: "The altar lamp burned *continuously* for centuries."
See *continually*.

COUNCIL, COUNSEL: A *council* is a legislative or advisory body. A *counsel* is a legal adviser, or the advice given. A *councilor* is a member of a council. A *counselor* is an adviser.

CREDIBLE: Something which it is possible to believe: "The story told by Nobile is entirely credible." See *credulous, creditable.*

CREDITABLE: Means in a manner deserving credit or praise: "A *creditable* (*i.e.,* praiseworthy) performance."

CREDULOUS: Means *easily imposed on.* A *credulous* person is one who naïvely accepts what is told him. See *credible, creditable.*

D

DATA: A plural form. The singular *datum* is rarely used.

DIFFER FROM, DIFFER WITH: *Differ from* indicates difference in quality: "Rayon differs from silk." *Differ with* indicates difference in opinion: "I differ with the first speaker."

DIFFERENT THAN, DIFFERENT TO: American usage prefers *different from.* A British usage. Americans have never accepted it.

DISINTERESTED: Means *impartial,* without desire for gain to one's self: "The referee must be *disinterested*" (*i.e.,* he must have no more interest in one side than in the other). Do not confuse with *uninterested,* or *indifferent.*

DOMINATE, DOMINANT: Dominate is a verb, meaning to control or mentally overpower. "Victoria dominated her ministers." *Dominant* is an adjective: "Victorianism was the dominant influence."

DON'T, DO NOT: Contractions are informal, and hence not to be used in formal contexts. Incorrect with the third personal singular: Wrong: John don't understand. Wrong: She don't know the story. Right when used with I, you, or plurals.

E

EFFECT: A verb or noun.
As a verb: "He will *effect* an entrance into the city."
As a noun: "The *effect* of late hours is soon apparent."
See *affect.*

ENTHUSE, ENTHUSED: Barbarisms. These terms may ultimately be accepted, but they are not now in good usage.

ETC.: Abbreviation for *et cetera.*
Since *et* is the Latin *and,* it is a tautology to write *and etc.*

EXCEPT: See *accept.*

EXCEPTIONAL, EXCEPTIONABLE: Exceptional means *unusual.*
Exceptionable means *objectionable:* "His manners were exceptionable."

G

GENTLEMAN, LADY: Do not use when you mean *man, woman.*
Landlady is fixed by usage, but *saleslady* is not.

GOTTEN: *Got* is the preferred form of the perfect tense, though gotten is perfectly good English (see page 300):
"He must have got his allowance on Saturday."
Both got and gotten are sometimes redundant.
When you mean, "What have you?" do not say, "What have you got?"

H

HAD BETTER, HAD BEST, HAD RATHER: These forms are all in good usage. One may also say *would better, would best,* and *would rather.* Perhaps *would rather* is more used than *had rather.* "I would rather stay at home than go abroad."

HUMAN, HUMANE: Both are derived from *homo* (man). *Human* means having the qualities, good and bad, of man.
Humane indicates the better qualities, especially mercy, or kindness.

Human as a noun (instead of *human being*) is distasteful to many, but is, nevertheless, becoming more widely accepted.

HUNG, HANGED: There is a distinction:
Right: "They hung the clothes to dry."
Right: "They hanged the highwayman."

I

IN, INTO: *Into* is usually used to indicate motion:
"He drove *into* the garage."
"The car is *in* the garage."

IN BACK OF, IN FRONT OF: "In front of the house" is correct, but "in back of the house" is objectionable.
Say, "*behind* the house."

INGENIOUS, INGENUOUS: One who is inventive or clever is *ingenious;* one who is simple and trustful is *ingenuous.*

INSIDE, INSIDE OF:
Right: "They were inside the wrecked sedan."
Right: "The inside of the cup."
Wrong: "The train will arrive inside of an hour."
Right: "The train will arrive within an hour."

INSTANCE, INSTANT: Instance means an example used for purposes of illustration; an instant is a moment of time.

ITS, IT'S: *Its* is a possessive adjective: "An army with *its* baggage."
It's is a contraction of *it is*: "*It's* not my baggage."

K

KIND OF A, SORT OF A: Colloquial: "What kind of a car is that?"
Better: "What kind of car is that?"
a=an=one, therefore *logically* "kind of a" is bad usage.

KIND OF: Colloquialism: "He acted kind of tired."
Right: "He acted rather tired."

L

LAY, LIE: *Lay* is transitive and requires an object; it indicates that one is acting upon something. *Lie* is intransitive and does not take an object; it indi-

cates an act by the subject, but not upon anything. Thus, "I *laid* my cards on the table before he could speak"; but, "My cards *lay* there, face up, before him." The principal parts are:

I lay	I laid	I have laid
I lie	I lay	I have lain

LEAD, LED: *Lead* (the verb) is present. *Led* is the past and past participle.
"You lead the march today."
"He led the march yesterday."

LEAVE, LET: Wrong: "Leave go of the rope."
Right: "Let go of the rope."
One may say "Leave him alone," if asking someone to go away from another person; or "Let him alone," if asking someone to stop molesting another.

LESS, FEWER: *Less* indicates quantity, and *fewer* indicates number of individuals.
Right: "We threshed less wheat this year than last."
Right: "We killed fewer ducks this year than last."

LIABLE, LIKELY: *Liable* usually means responsible for, under obligation to: "He is liable to fine and imprisonment."
Likely indicates probability: "That is likely to happen."
Apt, sometimes used as a synonym for *likely,* should be used to express an inherent tendency: "Mere memorizing is apt to be futile."

LIKE: Should be followed by a substantive only, and not by a predication. "He walks like a soldier."
"He walks as soldiers do who were trained in the army."
See *as.*

LINE: Used very loosely and ineffectively in place of *kind, business* and other definite terms. Avoid such expressions as "line of work," "shoe line," "along this line."

LOAN: Usually a noun, but the *New English Dictionary* sanctions its occasional use as a verb.

"To loan a book." It is still better to say, "To lend a book."
See *borrow* and *lend.*
In banking circles, especially, *loan* is commonly used as a verb.

LOOSE: Usually an adjective: *loose* change. As a verb it is poetic or obsolete:
"Loose the chain, unbind the ring."
Avoid confusing *loose* with *lose.*

LOSE: A verb. Lose; lost; lost.
See *loose.*

LOSE OUT, WIN OUT: Colloquialisms.
Win and *lose* are sufficient.

M

MOST: Distinguish from *almost.*
Wrong: "Most all men are hearty eaters."
Right: "Almost all men."
Right: "Most men are hearty eaters."

O

OFF OF: Incorrect for *off.*
Right: "He fell off the scaffold."

OFTENTIMES: *Often* is better.
Oft and *oftentimes* are poetic, particularly the first.

P

PART FROM, PART WITH: We *part from* a friend, a companion.
We *part with* (give up) our possessions.

PARTY: A person or group of persons taking part in some business or legal transaction.
Right: "Both parties to the contract objected."
Do not use party to mean person. Telephone usage, however, perhaps thinking of a transaction, is: "Did you get your *party?*"

PASSED, PAST: *Passed* is the past tense and past participle of *pass.*
Past, besides being an adjective (as used above) is also a noun: "A man with a past."

PER CENT: Should be used with a number, as in *twenty per cent.*
Avoid expressions such as: "*The greater per cent* were employed." Use *part* or *percentage.*

PHENOMENA: A plural form. The singular is *phenomenon.*

PRACTICAL, PRACTICABLE: *Practical* means useful, sensible, or valuable because a time or money-saver: "A practical dress, or person, or scheme."
Practicable means *capable of being put into practice*: "A practicable plan."

PRINCIPAL, PRINCIPLE: *Principal* is sometimes a noun, as in "the *principal* of a school"; "*principal* with interest." Often it is an adjective meaning *most important*: "The *principal* character."
Principle is always a noun; it means law or theory.

PROPOSITION: Often incorrectly used. Propositiŏn means *proposal.* "He made me an attractive proposition." Wrong: "To win the case will be a hard proposition."

Q

QUITE: "Your money will be quite safe," should mean, "Your money will be *entirely* safe."
The use of *quite* to mean *moderately* or *fairly* is colloquial.
Do not confuse with *quiet,* meaning *not noisy, stillness.*

R

RAISE, RISE: Raise is a transitive verb and hence requires an object. Compare the principal parts of *raise* and *rise.*

I raise	I raised	I have raised
I rise	I rose	I have risen

Raise is not a noun. Hence the expression:
"He got a raise in wages" is wrong.
"He got a rise in wages" is correct.

REASON IS BECAUSE, Ungrammatical. Following the copula *is* we must have a substantive:

REASON IS DUE TO, REASON IS ON ACCOUNT OF:
Right: "The reason for his failure is *that* he was ill."

S

SAME:
Not used as a pronoun except in legal phraseology.
Bad: "The shipment has arrived and payment for *same* will be made on the first of next month."
Better: "The shipment has arrived, and payment for it will be made."

SCULPTOR, SCULPTURE:
The *sculptor* is the artist who works in stone. The *sculpture* is the work of art.

SET AND SIT:
Set means to place or put: "I *set* the vase on the table."
Sit means to occupy a place: "The hen *sits* on the eggs."
Wrong: "The house set on a hill."
Right: "The house was set on a hill."
Right: "The house sits on a hill."
The principal parts of these verbs are:

I set	I set	I have set
I sit	I sat	I have sat

SITE, SIGHT, CITE:
"A building *site*."
"A *sight* for sore eyes."
"The devil can *cite* Scripture."

SO:
A comparative: "He was so weak that he could hardly stand."
It is sometimes incorrectly used as an intensive; as such it has been called "the feminine demonstrative."
Bad: "I am so hungry."
Better: "I am very hungry."

SPEAK TO, SPEAK WITH:
Speak to implies that one person does the talking.
Speak with implies an interchange, a conversation.

SPECIE, SPECIES:
Specie means gold or silver money.
Species, though plural in form, means *kind* or *kinds*: "He discovered a new *species* of beetle." "They discovered ten new *species* of fungi."

STATIONARY, STATIONERY:
Stationary is an adjective meaning *not moving.*
Stationery is a noun meaning *writing paper.*

STAY, STOP: To *stay* means to remain for a time; to *stop* means to cease from motion.
Right: "I stayed at the Blackstone."
Right: "The train stopped before the station."

STRATA: A plural form. The singular is *stratum*.

SUCH: Avoid using *such* as an intensive; it should be followed by a clause showing result.
Colloquial: "We were having such fun."
Better: "We were having such fun that we did not notice the approaching storm."
See *so*.

SUIT, SUITE: A suit of clothes; a lawsuit.
Suite (pronounced *sweet*) means set; a suite of rooms.

T

THEIR, THERE: *Their* is a plural possessive: "Fools and *their* money."
There is an adverb: "*There* is my house."

TO, TOO, TWO: *To* is a preposition: "He went *to* town."
Too is an adverb: "He went *too* often."
Two is an adjective: "He saw *two* plays."

TRY AND: "Try and get it" is incorrect because the *and* makes a false coördination between the words, *try* and *get*.
Right: "Try *to* get it."
(There is evidence, however, that *try and* is becoming accepted as a useful idiom in place of the grammatical *try to*.)

U

UNIQUE: Means *one*. Hence a thing cannot be "more unique" or "less unique" or "fairly unique." A thing is either unique or it is not unique.

UNITED STATES: Should be preceded by the definite article: "We live in *the* United States."

W

WANT, WANT FOR: (1) Should be followed by an infinitive clause:
Right: "I want you to enjoy yourself."

(2) Should not be followed by "for":
Wrong: "I want for you to work harder."
Right: "I want you to work harder."
(3) The elliptical forms "want in," and "want out" are localisms.

WAY: Should not be used for *away*.
Wrong: "The airplane mounted way up into the clouds."
Right: "The airplane mounted away up (or far up) into the clouds."
Distinguish also from *a way*.
Right: "He went a way and then stopped."
Right: "He stood a little way off."
Do not use *ways* for *way*.

WHERE, FOR THAT: Wrong: "I saw in the *Herald* where Hagen won the international golf championship."
Right: "I saw in the *Herald* that Hagen won the international golf championship."

Index

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

Abstract, 485, 486
Actions should grow out of character, 707
Adjectives and adverbs, 649-651
Agreement, grammatical, 169, 763, 764, 785, 786
Alien words, 309
Alliteration, 221
American Library Association, catalog of, 384
Americanism, 305
Analogy in argument, 533-536
Analysis, and description of character, 659 *et seq.;* of materials, 426-428
Analyzing and outlining, 331-344
Ancients, practice of, in argument, 547
Anglicism, 305
Anthologies, 386
Aphorism, 187
Archaisms, 306
Argument, facts in, 518; fallacies in, 549-571; issues in, 527, 528; logic in, 522-524; nature of, 516
Argumentative writing, 514; exercises in, 572 *et seq.*
Art, writing an, 6, 9
Artist, definition of, 7
Assonance, 221
Atmosphere in narrative, 713
Authority, 532

Barbarism, 268
Beauty in sentences, 219
Beginnings, 354, 355; formal and informal, 356-359
Book report, the, 744-748; outlines for, 746-748
Books of synopses, 386-387
Brief, the, 538-546

Cacophony, 222
Cadence, 223-225
Cause and effect, 537
Character, creating, in narrative, 728; development of, 710; type, 709
Charm, personality, 26
Clause defined, 157
Clauses classified, 157
Clearness, and clear thinking, 41; in sentences, 182; relative, 40
Coinages, 307
Colloquialisms, 303
Comeliness in sentences, 224
Common rationality, 536
Communication, a communion, 9; difficulty in, 5
Compression, dialogue a means to, 702
Conceits, 152
Concentration in preparation for writing, 93
Concordances, 387, 388
Concrete expression, 30, 282-285
Connotation in words, 268, 273 *et seq.;* consistency in, 276, 277
Coördination, 176-179
Criticism, 489-498; exercises in, 499 *et seq.;* methods in, 495-496; not fault finding, 491; objective, 494, 495; subjective, 492, 493

Definition, approximate, 437-440; characteristics of, 433-435; exact, 437; importance of, 429; of terms, 525; rules for, 436; the concrete in, 440, 441; variations in, 431
Denotations in words, 269 *et seq.*
Describing and observing, 597-600
Description, comparison and contrast in, 631 *et seq.*; diction of, in narrative, 695-698; dominant impression in, 586 *et seq.*; exercises in, 600 *et seq.*, 618 *et seq.*, 637 *et seq.*, 644 *et seq.*, 655 *et seq.*; graphic, 640 *et seq.*; impression in, 586 *et seq.*; impressionistic, 591-594; length in, 626; methods in, 620 *et seq.*, 628, 634; order of detail in, 622-626; point of view in, 606-613; purpose in, 616-618; selection in, 585, 586, 620, *et seq.*; subjective element in, 613-616; suggestion in, 589 *et seq.*
Descriptive writing, 583 *et seq.*
Dialogue, 698 *et seq.*; a means to compression, 702; exhibits character, 700; must advance story, 700
Dictionaries, use of, 262-268; kinds of, 385, 386, 389-392
Divisions, rules for, 338

Effect, singleness of, in description, 585 *et seq.*
Epigram, 187
Epithet, 278, 279
Euphemism, 222, 294
Euphony, 220
Euphuism, 222
Examinations, written, 755-758
Experience, personal, in narrative, 722, 723
Experiencing life, 88-96; essential to good writing, 92, 93
Exposition, nature of, 423-425; the materials of, 425; through illustrations, 473; through reasons, 477

Facts, and presumption, 530; in argument, 518, 528; in reports, 744; interest in, 24
Fallacies, 549 *et seq.*; of begging the question, 556; of definition, 562-565; of half-truth, 565-568; of illogical relationship, 568-571; of misconception, 557-560; of popular belief, 555, 556; of prejudice, 560-562; of unsupported assertion, 551-555
Familiarity, the gift of, 279
Faulty expressions and misused terms, glossary of, 819-830
Figures of speech, 285-296; function of, 285, 286; right use of, 295
Folk sayings, 189, 190
Footnotes, 408; content of, 411, 412; fashions in, 409, 410; nature of, 409
Force, 27; in the sentence, 183
"Four Forms," the, 420-422
French Academy, 150

Good usage, 153
Grammar, conventions of, 149, 150; good, 149; outline of, 763-788
Grammatical relationships, 171-173; congruity in, 173-175

Hyperbole, 292

Idiom, 281, 788
Illustration, value of, 31
Imitation, and originality, 59, 60; Phelps on, 99
Impropriety, 267
Indexes, 389-392
Inflection, 167-169

Interest, in subject matter, 18; story of human, 23; through style, 26, 31
Interpretation, in description, 585-597; in exposition, 461-472; objects of, 465; of architecture, 468; of literary passages, 469-470; risk in, 462; value of, 464
Interpretative presentation, 478 *et seq.*
Interview, 329
Inversion, 207-219; psychology of, 209

Language, changes in, 152; fashions in, 151
Library, a storehouse of condensed human experience, 375-378; card catalog of, 393-395; getting books from, 396-397; reference works—Poole's *Index, Encyclopedia Britannica, New International Cyclopedia,* etc., 377-381, 389-392
Limiting the subject, 329-331
Literary ethics, 404-407
Litotes, 293, 294
Longer composition, the, 326; assembling materials for, 327
Lucidity, the first rule for style, 38, 39; of French writers praised, 39

Malapropisms, 271 *et seq.*
Metaphor, 288, 289
Meter, bad in prose, 227
Metonymy, 290
Middle, the, 365 *et seq.*
Mixed types in exposition, 472-498
Mot, the, 188

Narrative, exercises in, 672, 676, 683, 731-740; power of, in argument, 546-549
Narrative writing, 665 *et seq.;* beginning of, 730; character in, 692 *et seq.;* composition of, 720-731; elements of action in, 683-692; endings in, 718-720; essential steps in, 728-730; exposition in, 717, 718; method in, 715-717; motivation and foreshadowing in, 687-692; plot in, 685-687; purpose in, 672-677; selection of materials in, 667 *et seq.;* setting in, 711; subject matter in, 721-724; unity in, 715
New words, 311
Notes, methods in, 401-403; taking, 397-399; types of, 400
Novelty not originality, 60

Onomatopœia, 285, 646, 647
Order of words, 41
Originality, demand for, 58, 59; nature of, 57, 60, 61; ways to, 62-66
Outline, the, 331-344; examples of, 335, 336; form of, 341

Paragraph, the development of idea of, 110-112; development, 113 *et seq.;* exercises in, 134-148; materials in, 132; of analogy, 127; of comparison and contrast, 127-129; of definition, 121; of explication, 118-121; of illustration, 123; of particulars and details, 124-126; of reasons, 129, 130; of refutation, 130; proportion in, 133; topic sentence in, 114 *et seq.;* types of, 112; unity of, 133; variety in, 133
Parallelism, 175, 203-207
Paraphrase, 487, 488
Period fault, 164
Periodicals, 377
Personification, 291, 292
Phrase, defined, 156
Phrases, classified, 156; exercises in, 165, 166

Plagiarism defined, 58, 59
Pleonasm, 297
Point of view, in description, 606-613; in narration, 677-683
Preparation for writing, general, 88; observing in, 327, 328; reading in, 327; talking in, 328
Presentation in exposition, 445-461
Process, explanation of, 450-454
Prolixity, 298
Proportion, an element of unity, 47, 48
Proverb, 187
Punctuation, 789-797; a structural matter, 236, 237; exercises in, 243-248; of the paragraph, 112; of the sentence, 235-248
Purists, 150

Reading, and writing, 96-103; Ford and Conrad on, 98; men who have advocated, for writing, 97; not for imitation, 99, 100; of great writers, 100-102, 327; Stevenson on, 97
Reasoning, *a posteriori*, 523; *a priori*, 523; false, 550, 569-571
Redundancy, 297
Reference books, 378 *et seq.*; how to use, 379 *et seq.*
Reference room, 377
Report of observation, 454-456
Report writer, attitude of, 743
Reports, 741; based on library research, 748-750; book, 744-748; exercises in, 758-760; investigation, 753-755; kinds of, 741-742; the aim in, 744; visual aids in, 751-760
Restraint, 69-77; in Galsworthy and Hardy, 71, 74, 75; violated by Disraeli, 70, 71
Rhetoric, false, 4
Rhythm, imitative effects in, 228; in sentences, 223, 230; of prose, 49

Scientific description, 448-450
Self-criticism, 15
"Sentence fragment," 161
Sentence, the, 149; beauty in the, 219-230; defined, 153; effective patterns, 181-183; length of, 183-187; rhetoric of, 181
Sentences, balanced, 197-203; classified, 157; exercises in, 164-167, 179-181, 195-197, 201-203, 205-207, 215-219, 230-235, 243-258; loose and periodic, 191-197; order in, 190, 207
Setting in narrative, 711
Simile, 286
Sincerity, a quality of good writing, 69-75
Slang, 300-303
Solecism, 268
Specific expression, 30, 282-284
Spelling, 810-816
Style, appropriate, 49; beauty in, 219-230; concrete and specific in, 282-285; defined, 7, 8, 9, 31, 39, 42; idiom and, 280, 281; in description, 646-651; interest and, 26-28; lucidity and, 39 *et seq.*; originality and, 57 *et seq.*; punctuation and, 239-242; restraint and, 69-76; sentence structure and, 281 *et seq.*; simplicity in, 279; variety in, 28-30
Subordination, 176-178
Synecdoche, 290

Taboos, verbal, 276
Tautology, 296
Testimony, 532
Thinking, and concentration, 95; consists in seeing relationships, 96; the basis of good writing, 94-96
Topic statement in the paragraph, 114
Transition, 368-371; inversion for, 213, 368-371

Translation, 488
Trite words, 309-311, 649-651
Type characters, 709

Unity, exercises in, 52-56; in narrative, 715; of parts, 50, 51; of tone and method, 48, 49; organic, 44; Plato and Aristotle on, 45
Usage, levels of, 152

Variety, and interest, 28; in paragraphs, 133; in sentences, 228, 229
Verbosity, 298
Verbs in description, 648
Vitality in style, 27

Words, and thinking, 259, 260; Conrad's care for, 314; finding meanings of, 261-263; learning to use, 260 *et seq.*; rules for use of, 265; special distinctions in, 312 *et seq.*; wrong uses of, 264-266
Writer, must have something to say, 12, 13; must know his readers, 10, 11
Writing, a living business, 3; an art of progression, 109; an instrument of power, 4; can it be taught? 15; good, defined, 11, 17, 39, 89; how to begin, 4; must be interesting, 18; preliminaries to, 351-354; when to begin, 350

INDEX OF NAMES AND TITLES

Abbott, Lyman, 433
Abélard and Héloïse, 38
Adams, J. Q., 100, 405
Addison, 12, 102, 360
Adventures of a Soul, The, 439, 493
Aiken, Conrad, 480
Ambitious Guest, The, 689
Amenities of Book Collecting, The, 33
America and England Six Hundred Words Apart, 306
American Commonwealth, The, 334
Americanization of Europe, The, 540
Anatole France Himself, 269
Anaxagoras, 62
Apologia pro Sua Vita, 234
Apology for Poetry, An, 500, 502
Aristotle, 42, 44, 45, 47, 48, 518, 521, 532
Arlen, Michael, 277
Armstrong, Professor, 261
Arnold, Matthew, 14, 432, 437, 501, 637
Art and Criticism, 90, 280
Art of Poetry, 48
Art of Rodin, The, 500
Arte of Rhetorique, 272
Ascham, Robert, 95

Bacon, Francis, 101, 188, 189, 220, 440
Balzac, 287, 494
Bates, Arlo, 187, 235
Bates, Ernest Sutherland, 196
Batouala, 288
Beach, Joseph Warren, 310
Beau Geste, 272
Beau Sabreur, 294
Beauties of Wordsworth's Poetry, 260
Beebe, William, 36, 328, 361, 656
Beecher, Henry Ward, 274
Behn, Aphra, 287
Beloved Physician, The, 125
Bennett, Arnold, 191, 192, 292, 323, 324, 464, 641
Benson, A. C., 96
Bent, Silas, 566
Beowulf, 293, 320, 586
Bernier, 665
Betterton, 63
Biblical quotations, 219, 297, 616, 618
Bierce, Ambrose, 235, 241
Björnson, 375
Blair, Hugh, 260, 432
Borrow, George, 281
Boycott, Captain, 308
Boyd, James, 207, 210, 323
Brontë, the sisters, 92
Brooke, Rupert, 199
Brousson, J. J., 269
Brown, George Douglas, 589, 594
Brown, Rollo Walter, 335, 446
Browne, Sir Thomas, 214
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 27
Browning, Robert, 101, 261, 463
Brunetière, 39
Bryce, James, 334
Buffon, 89, 326
Bulwer-Lytton, 101, 327
Bunyan, 470
Burke, Edmund, 206
Burr, Aaron, 329, 346
Burroughs, John, 29, 239, 328, 360, 460, 470, 675

Burt, Struthers, 165
By-Ways and Bird Notes, 597

Cabell, J. B., 306
Calisto and Melibea, 299
Canby, H. S., 11, 39, 164, 369, 479
Capek, Karel, 540, 557
Captains Courageous, 658
Carlyle, Thomas, 75, 95, 231, 420, 612
Cathedral, The, 624, 630, 655, 696
Cather, Willa, 188, 295, 299, 649
Caxton, William, 284, 391
Chalmers, Stephen, 125, 216
Chamberlain, Allen, 33
Chapman, 101
Chaucer, 28, 101, 190, 294, 306, 358
Chauvin, Nicholas, 307
Chekov, 232
Chesterton, G. K., 187, 222
Cibber, Colley, 63, 251
Cicero, 224, 519
Clemenceau, 288
Cleopatra, 28, 229
Clive, Lord, 47
Clutton-Brock, A., 8, 355
Coleridge, 12, 46, 49, 50, 226, 260, 261
Collins, Wilkie, 161, 207, 278, 625
Colton, Arthur, 164
Colvin, Sidney, 210
Commonwealth of England, The, 438
Confucius, 202
Congreve, 27
Conquest of Mexico, The, 420
Conrad, Joseph, 31, 39, 40, 98, 158, 164, 195, 196, 222, 226, 314, 354, 593, 608, 622, 631
Constantinople, 157
Constantinople, 609
Cooper, J. F., 21
Copernicus, 289
Countries of the Mind, 128
Country House, The, 190
Courtney, W. L., 432
Crabb, 262
Crane, Nathalia, 263
Crane, Stephen, 183, 321
Crevecœur, 728
Critical Woodcuts, 234
Criticism of Anna Karénina, 501
Criticism of Criticism of Criticism, 444
Culver, Frank H., 534
Curtis, George William, 529
Cynthia's Revels, 265

Daisy Miller, 297
Dance of the Bon Odori, 656
Dante, 6, 286, 314
Darrow, Clarence, 329
Darwin, 405, 537
Daudet, 287
Davies, W. H., 36
Davis, Richard Harding, 328
De Amicis, 157, 158, 609
Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, The, 420
Deeping, Warwick, 199, 232, 288, 319, 607, 628
Defoe, Daniel, 561
de France, Marie, 294
de la Mare, Walter, 277
de Mandeville, Bernard, 409
de Maupassant, 511, 599, 680, 696, 702
Demos, Raphael, 491
Demosthenes, 549
De Quincey, 231
Desert, The, 447
de Worde, 284
Dickens, 10, 27, 28, 244, 294, 465, 482, 548, 592
Dickens in Memory, 361
Dickinson, G. Lowes, 192, 346, 368, 369
Dinsmore, C. A., 124
Discoveries, 228
Disraeli, 70, 74
Disraeli, 142, 327
Divided Horsecloth, The, 190
Don't Call them Dumb-bells, 355
Doomsday, 232, 288, 319, 628

Dove's Nest, The, 207
Doyle, A. Conan, 242
Drew, Elizabeth, 121, 323
Drums, 207, 323
Dryden, 77, 101, 151, 323, 583
Du Bellay, 97, 99
Durant, Will, 185, 201, 217, 362, 514, 524, 555
Dynasts, The, 313, 634

Edison, Thomas, 531, 533
Education and the Good Life, 35, 120, 127, 186, 357
Egoist, The, 441
Einstein, 404, 405
Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard, 45
Eliot, C. W., 165
Eliot, George, 101, 161, 176, 233, 589, 682
El Ombú, 608
Emerson, 5, 20, 21, 61, 65, 90, 230, 280, 289, 291, 315, 507
Encyclopedia Britannica, and other cyclopedias, 377-381, 389-392
End of the Tether, The, 196
Endymion, 353
Enemy in Ambush, The, 636
English Composition, 44, 355
English Journal, The, 300
English Novel, The, 558
Erskine, John, 701
Essay on Criticism, 406
Essays and Studies, 357
Essays in the Art of Writing, 352
Excursion, The, 298

Fabre, 328
Faerie Queene, 188
Falk and Other Stories, 42, 631
Fall of Hyperion, 286
Far From the Madding Crowd, 642
Ferber, Edna, 323
Fernald, 262
Fielding, 28, 320
Fingal's Cave, 632
Fix Bayonets, 590, 654
Flandrau, C. M., 457
Flaubert, 203, 314, 510, 574, 599
Flecker, James Elroy, 316
Ford, Ford Madox, 31, 39, 98, 314, 354
Forrest, Wilbur, 449
Forsyte Saga, The, 7, 21, 63, 187, 205, 307, 633
Forum, The, 430-431
Founding of the University of Michigan, The, 534
Fowler, H. W., 263, 306
France, Anatole, 31, 38, 39, 223, 251, 270, 439, 493
Frank, Glenn, 557
Frank, Waldo, 241
Franklin, Benjamin, 198
Fraternity, 205, 600, 636
Freeman, E. A., 204
French Revolution, The, 420
Freshman and His College, The, 114-116
Freud, 405
Fries, Charles, 300

Galahad, 701
Galsworthy, John, 14, 21, 39, 63, 66, 70, 71, 88, 96, 144, 165, 187, 190, 205, 307, 309, 548, 588, 600, 627, 633, 636, 642, 719
Gammer Gurton's Needle, 270
Garrison, William Lloyd, 313
Garrod, H. W., 225
Genung, 315
Gibbon, 211, 420
Gibbs, Sir Philip, 8, 288
Gissing, George, 20, 37, 306, 323, 361, 465, 483, 598, 599, 622
Gladstone, 142
Goeffrey of Monmouth, 588
Goethe, 60, 500, 598
Gogol, 635
Goldsmith, Oliver, 26, 523, 524, 561
Good Word for Winter, A, 661
Gorgias, 3, 212
Gorki, 635
Gosse, Edmund, 192, 209, 211, 213

Graham, R. B. Cunninghame, 70
Grandmothers, The, 162, 243, 319, 608
Granville-Barker, 359
Gray, Thomas, 45, 46
Grayson, David, 407
Greek Poets, The, 49, 369
Greek View of Life, The, 346, 368, 369
Green Hill Far Away, A, 144
Green Mansions, 715, 717
Greene Murder Case, The, 25, 26
Greenough, C. N., 302
Growth of the Soil, 550
Gulliver's Travels, 670
Gurkin, Jean, 726
Gypsy, The, 635

Habit, 229
Hakluyt, 745
Hamlet, 288
Hamsun, Knut, 550
Hansen, Ida, 708
Hard Times, 244
Hardy, Thomas, 28, 70, 74, 75, 190, 211, 287, 313, 361, 463, 588, 634, 638, 642
Harrison, Frederic, 205, 505
Harte, Bret, 684, 693, 717
Hawthorne, 116, 120, 130, 159, 241, 609, 637, 689
Hayden, B. R., 234
Hazlitt, 184, 220, 226, 388, 407, 584, 638
Headlong Hall, 462
Hearn, Lafcadio, 43, 65, 76, 77, 94, 97, 137, 218, 282, 320, 644, 656
Heart of Emerson's Journal, The, 35, 38
Hecht, Ben, 232
Hemingway, Ernest, 323
Henry Esmond, 678
Henry, O., 232, 242, 281, 287, 360
Hergesheimer, Joseph, 464
Historical Essays, 625
History of the Stage, 251
Hobbes, Thomas, 191, 282
Hobbs, William, 537
Homer, 11, 14, 286
Hopwood, E. C., 159, 445
Horace, 48, 189
House with the Green Shutters, The, 589, 594
How the French Boy Learns to Write, 335
How to Become an Author, 67, 70
How to Read, 205
How to Study, 114
Hudson, W. H., 595, 607, 608, 621, 629, 715
Hugo, Victor, 449
Huxley, Thomas, 158, 193, 242, 433, 486

Ibsen, 259, 548
Idea of a University, The, 91, 201, 205
Illusion: 1915, 653
Impeachment of Warren Hastings, The, 206
Institutes of Oratory, 40
Intruder, The, 711
Irving, Washington, 203, 212

James, William, 229, 440
Joanna Godden Married, 202, 277
Johnson, Samuel, 101, 151, 243, 323, 461, 574
Jonson, Ben, 97, 101, 102, 228, 265, 560
Jordan, David Starr, 189, 217, 562
Jowett, Benjamin, 212
Joyce, James, 698
Jungle Peace, 36, 361, 596, 656
Justice, 719

Katreena, 708
Kaye-Smith, Sheila, 195, 202, 277
Keats, John, 76, 91, 97, 101, 102, 132, 210, 211, 275, 278, 286, 289, 291, 306, 353, 598, 615, 632, 637
Kilmer, Joyce, 269
King Lear, 640

King's English, The, 307
King's Henchman, The, 320
Kinney, Henry W., 33
Kipling, 161, 217, 658
Kittredge, George L., 302
Krapp, G. P., 333

La Giaconda, 465
Lamb, Charles, 1, 74, 219, 360, 439
Lanier, Sidney, 164, 558
Last Supper, The, 46
Lauder, Harry, 21, 22
Lawrence, T. E., 596
Leadership of Educated Men, The, 529
Lear of the Steppes, A, 662
Lectures on Architecture and Painting, 214, 652
Lectures on Art, 445
Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, 260, 432
Le Gallienne, Richard, 123, 125, 473, 601
Lehmann, Captain, 478
Lessing, 109
Letters (of Walter Raleigh), 57, 188, 211, 406
Letters and Papers (J. A. Symonds), 102, 129, 162, 494, 502, 613, 624, 627, 645
Letters of an American Farmer, 724
Lewes, George Henry, 214
Lewis, Sinclair, 556
Lewisohn, Ludwig, 196, 210
Library of Congress, 394
Life and Letters (of Lafcadio Hearn), 320, 644
Life and Letters (of Mark Twain), 281
Life of Dante, 124
Lightfoot, J. B., 625
Lincoln, Abraham, 102, 526, 528
Literary Essays, 130, 131, 358
Lockwood, Francis, 114
Lodge, 221
London, Jack, 21
London Times, The, 19, 300
London Venture, The, 277
Longfellow, 576
Longinus, 14, 60, 97, 191, 204, 218
Lost Battalion, The, 449
Lost Lady, A, 650
Lowell, Amy, 132
Lowell, James Russell, 46, 130, 358, 578, 660
Lucas, St. John, 638
Ludwig, Emil, 327
Lyly, John, 187, 221, 222

Macaulay, Lord, 47, 101, 198, 204, 217, 284
Macdonald, W. A., 77, 78, 79
Maeterlinck, 711
Malory, 27, 586
Man and Superman, 200
Mansfield, Katherine, 162, 207, 241
Maran, René, 288
Marlowe, 404
Martel, Charles, 288
Martin Chuzzlewit, 294, 482, 592
Master Builder, The, 259
Master of Ballantrae, The, 352
Mateo Falcone, 703
Maugham, Somerset, 294, 320, 629
Maurois, André, 9, 142, 327
Mayo, Katherine, 140
McFee, William, 216
McKerrow, R. B., 357
Meaning of Words, The, 300
Melville, Herman, 278
Mencken, H. L., 99, 100, 165, 184, 444
Merchant of Venice, The, 536
Meredith, George, 287, 441, 494
Mérimée, Prosper, 703
Michigan Daily, The, 19
Migration of Birds, The, 455
Mill, J. S., 202
Mill on the Floss, 682, 690
Millay, Edna St. Vincent, 320
Miller, Armand R., 355
Mills, Florence, Funeral of, 77

Milton, John, 14, 28, 101, 102, 211, 286, 388, 469
Mirror of the Sea, The, 663
Modern English, Its Growth and Present Use, 333
Modern Gallantry, 174
Modern Novel, The, 121, 323
Montague, C. E., 292, 440
Montaigne, 64
Moonstone, The, 161
Moore, J. B., 221
Morals of College Journalism, The, 159, 445
Morley, Christopher, 306
Mosses from an Old Manse, 116, 117, 120, 130, 610
Mother and Son, 631
Much Ado About Nothing, 271
Murray, Gilbert, 122, 129, 356
Murry, J. Middleton, 14, 65, 128, 195
My Boyhood, 30, 460, 675

Napoleon, 287, 327
Nash, Thomas, 66
Necklace, The, 679, 696, 702
Newcombes, The, 228
Newman, John Henry, 90, 91, 92, 201, 205, 208
Newton, A. E., 32
Newton, Isaac, 537
Notre Dame, 46
Noyes, Alfred, 289

Ode to a Nightingale, 275
Ode to the West Wind, 46
O'Flaherty, Liam, 452, 733
Of Human Bondage, 320, 629
Old Wives' Tale, 464, 641
Oliver Goldsmith, 203
Oliver Twist, 38
O'Neill, Eugene, 289
On Going on a Journey, 407
On Nature, 291
On Some Technical Elements of Style in Literature, 365
On Style, 94
On Style in the Art of Writing, 312
On the Sublime, 60, 204
On Writing and Writers, 505
Outlook for American Prose, The, 310
Owens, Senator, 520

Page, Ralph W., 51
Page, Walter, 51, 281, 441
Paradise Lost, 211, 284
Park, Mungo, 172
Parrish, Ann, 320
Pascal, 57, 220
Pater, Walter, 315, 465
Patterson, Paul, 78
Pattison, Mark, 233
Peacock, Thomas Love, 462
Pelletier, 39
Pendennis, 185, 228
Pepacton, 360
Perry, Bliss, 10, 35, 38
Perry, F. M., 436
Phædrus, 45
Phelps, William Lyon, 99, 100, 261
Pinero, A. W., 278
Plants and their Uses, 448
Plato, 3, 44, 204, 212, 259, 440, 525
Poe, Edgar Allan, 221, 449
Poetry and Truth, 500, 512
Points of View, 157
Poor Relations, 439
Pope, 102, 406, 583
Pope, 233
Popowska, Leokadya, 723
Prairie Years, 327
Preston, J. H., 259
Principles of Success in Literature, 214
Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft, The, 37, 323, 483, 598, 622
Professor's House, The, 188, 295
Pynson, 284

Quiller-Couch, 312
Quintessence of Ibsenism, 36
Quintilian, 40, 41, 76, 89, 97, 188, 296

Raleigh, Sir Walter, 36, 38, 57, 65, 188, 189, 195, 211, 259, 282, 323, 406, 505, 641
Raven, The, 221
Reaping Race, The, 452, 733
Recollection of the Last Days of Shelley and Byron, 679
Renaissance, The, 465
Revolt in the Desert, The, 596
Rienzi, 327
Rivals, The, 271
Robinson, Crabb, 465
Robinson, James H., 165, 394
Robinson, Lennox, 88, 96
Roget, 262, 270
Rolland, Romain, 321, 631
Romantic '90's, The, 123, 125, 473, 485, 601
Romeo and Juliet, 639
Rosalynde, 221
Rosetta Stone, The, 111
Rough Justice, 292, 440
Rousseau, 351
Ruskin, 7, 69, 194, 202, 214, 346, 362, 445, 467, 503, 520, 536, 552, 626, 652
Ruskin as Master of Prose, 503
Russell, Bertrand, 35, 120, 127, 165, 186, 195, 259, 357

Saintsbury, 216
Sandburg, Carl, 288, 327
Sargent, F. L., 448
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 12, 13, 94
Scott, Fred Newton, 158, 164, 276, 306, 438
Scott, Sir Walter, 281
Secret Sharer, The, 594
Seton-Thompson, 21
Severn, Joseph, 598
Shakespeare, 10, 11, 28, 50, 90, 100, 102, 111, 261, 284, 289, 360, 375, 469, 487, 537, 560, 633
Shakespeare and Modern Stagecraft, 359
Sharpe, William, 598, 608
Shaw, G. B., 32, 36, 47, 187, 200, 230
Shelley, 46, 278, 620
Sheridan, 271
Sherman, Stuart P., 157, 165, 234, 437
Sidney, Sir Philip, 500, 502
Silas Marner, 691
Sinclair, Upton, 548
Sins of Reviewing, The, 369
Smith, Alexander, 26, 64
Smith, Sir Thomas, 438
Socrates, 3
Solid Muldoon, The, 217
Song of Roland, 274
Soul As It Is, The, 356
Sounds, 656
Speeches and Addresses (Lincoln's), 525
Spencer, Herbert, 279, 437
Spenser, 188, 278, 306
Spirit of the Age and Other Essays, 585
Spring Freshets, 273
St. John's Eve, 635
Steele, Wilbur Daniel, 241
Stefansson, 669
Stendhal, 590
Stephens, James, 212, 213
Stevens, James, 180, 232
Stevenson, R. L., 27, 97, 201, 224, 231, 352, 364, 599, 603
Story of Philosophy, The, 185, 201, 362, 514, 524
Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 548
Strachey, Lytton, 223, 243
Street of Adventure, 8
Sun Also Rises, The, 323
Swift, Dean, 7, 42, 216, 670
Symonds, J. A., 49, 50, 102, 128, 161, 162, 164, 350, 369, 494, 502, 613, 624, 627, 644
Symposium, 440
Synge, J. M., 211

Tales of the Pampas, 595, 621
Talks and Talkers, 201
Talks on Writing, 65

Talks on Writing English, 236
Talks to Writers, 137
Taylor, Bayard, 35
Tempest, The, 220
Tenebris Interluctum, 316
Tennessee's Partner, 684, 687, 693, 717
Tennyson, 11, 27, 288, 328, 613
Thackeray, 27, 161, 185, 228, 287
Thackeray and His Daughter, 694
Thomas, Augustus, 132
Thomason, Captain, 590, 654
Thompson, Maurice, 597
Thoreau, 92, 118, 126, 149, 287, 595, 656
Thousand and One Nights, The, 292
Tiger, The, 723
Tilley, M. P., 470
To Let, 66, 71
Tom Jones, 320
Tomlinson, H. M., 328, 653
Tono Bungay, 699
Torch, The, 364
Trader Horn, 321, 453, 585
Tradition and Progress, 122, 129
Trelawney, 679
Tremendous Trifles, 222
Turgenev, 190, 273
Turner, 520, 536, 552
Twain, Mark, 281, 502

Unfortunate Traveler, The, 66
Unpopular Master, An, 355
Upstream, 196
Urn Burial, 214

Van Doren, Carl, 474
Van Dyke, John Charles, 447
Van Dyne, S. S., 449
Veiller, Bayard, 477
Verbal Taboos, 276
Views Afoot, 35
Vinci, Leonardo da, 46
Virgil, 46
Virtues of an Heroic Poem, 191
Viva Mexico, 457
Voice of a Scholar, The, 562
Voltaire, 362
Von Winkelried, Arnold, 282
Voyage to Lilliput, A, 216
Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation, 745

Walden, 119, 126
Walpole, Hugh, 14, 70, 624, 630, 636, 655, 696, 723
Watchers of the Skies, 289
Watson, John B., xv
Watson, Sir William, 291, 437
Way of the World, The, 27
Weinberg, Louis, 500
Wells, H. G., 70, 161, 699
Wendell, Barrett, 44, 149, 209, 211, 355
Wescott, Glenway, 162, 164, 243, 319
Wessex Tales, 190
Wetmore, Alexander, 456
White Monkey, The, 642
Whiteman, Paul, 343
Wilde, Oscar, 32, 187, 473
Wilder, Thornton, 27, 192, 217, 232
Wilson, Thomas, 272
Wilson, Woodrow, 432
Wister, Owen, 556
Witching Hour, The, 132
Woman in White, The, 278
Woodberry, George, 364
Woodlanders, The, 74, 287, 361
Words and Their Ways in English Speech, 302
Wordsworth, 225
Wordsworth, 93, 298, 350, 465
Wren, Percival, 199, 200, 212, 272, 294
Wright Brothers, 405
Wright, Harold Bell, 556

Young, Edward, 97
Young, James, 263
Youth, 222, 226, 314

Zeppelins, The, 478

stet (let it stand.)

371.7
0773

delete (leave out)

Personal Pronouns

Sing

I	you	he	she	it
my mine	your	his	her	its
me	you	him	"	it

Plu

we	you	ye	they	
our ours	your yours	thee	theirs	
us	you	thee	them	

PUNCTUATION

P 1 APOSTROPHE *Page 789*

P 2 BRACKETS *Page 790*

P 3 COLON *Page 790*

P 4 COMMA *Page 791*

P 5 DASH *Page 793*

P 6 EXCLAMATION POINT *Page 794*

P 7 HYPHEN *Page 794*

P 8 PARENTHESIS *Page 794*

P 9 PERIOD *Page 795*

P 10 QUESTION MARK *Page 795*

P 11 QUOTATION MARKS *Page 795*

P 12 SEMICOLON *Page 797*

MISCELLANEOUS

M 1 ABBREVIATIONS *Page 798*

M 2 ALLUSION *Page 799*

M 3 BARBARISM *Page 799*

M 4 BIBLIOGRAPHY *Page 799*

M 5 CAPITAL LETTERS *Page 800*

M 6 COMPOUND WORDS *Page 801*

M 7 DATES *Page 803*

M 8 FORMAL NOTES *Page 804*

M 9 ITALICS *Page 804*

M 10 LETTERS, BUSINESS AND PERSONAL *Page 804*

M 11 NUMBERS, HOW TO WRITE *Page 806*

M 12 PARENTHESIS *Page 806*

M 13 PLURALS *Page 807*

M 14 ROMAN NUMERALS *Page 809*

M 15 SPELLING *Page 810*

M 16 SYLLABICATION *Page 816*

M 17 TITLES *Page 817*

GRAMMAR

G 1 NOUN *Page 763*

G 2 PRONOUN *Page 764*

G 3 CASE *Page 765*

G 4 "IT" AND "THERE" AS EXPLETIVES *Page 767*

G 5 VERBS: KINDS AND TENSES *Page 768*

G 6 VOICE *Page 771*

G 7 MOOD *Page 772*

G 8 INFINITIVE, INF. PHRASES & CLAUSES *Page 773*

G 9 GERUND AND GERUND PHRASES *Page 774*

G 10 PARTICIPLE AND PARTICIPIAL PHRASES *Page 775*

G 11 SHALL AND WILL *Page 775*

G 12 ADJECTIVE *Page 776*

G 13 PRONOMINAL ADJECTIVES *Page 777*

G 14 ARTICLE *Page 777*

G 15 ADVERB *Page 778*

G 16 COMPARISON *Page 780*

G 17 PREPOSITION *Page 781*

GRAMMAR

G 18 CONJUNCTIONS AND CONJUNCTIVE ADV. *Page 782*

G 19 SENTENCE *Page 783*

G 20 CLAUSES *Page 784*

G 21 COMPLEMENTS *Page 784*

G 22 AGREEMENT IN GRAMMATICAL NUMBER *Page 785*

G 23 ANTECEDENT *Page 786*

G 24 DANGLING CONSTRUCTION *Page 786*

G 25 ABSOLUTE AND OTHER IND. CONSTRUCTIONS *Page 787*

G 26 APPOSITIVE *Page 787*

G 27 IDIOM *Page 788*